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~~**NEW DEAL**~~

**SAME OLD**



**REPORT FROM JOHANNESBURG PAGE 9**



# After Playskool

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

Corporate arrogance and disregard for both workers and communities in decisions to close factories is an old story. But the owners of the Playskool toy factory on this city's west side have added some new twists. As a result, they have encouraged new tactics to fight plant closings, expanding the growing, if not yet very effective, arsenal that communities and unions are deploying against plant shutdowns.

Started by a schoolteacher to make educational wooden toys, Playskool had been a locally-owned Chicago fixture since the mid-30s. In 1968 the Milton Bradley toy company bought Playskool, which continued to make puzzles, games and old stand-bys, like Lincoln Logs. In 1980 the city issued a \$1 million industrial revenue bond to help the company buy new machinery. Because income from such bonds are tax-free, interest rates are lower; Playskool borrowed its money at 8.2 percent at a time when many loans were double that and saved, according to one estimate, approximately \$200,000 in interest since the bonds were issued.

Playskool had qualified for such assistance because it promised "that the project will result in increased employment in the city, and will increase the city's industrial tax base." But instead of hiring 446 new employees as promised, the 1980 workforce of 1,156 shrank to about 700 this year. Although the recession cut sales of toys, the equipment purchased with the bond money also automated operations and reduced employment — raising the question of the validity of the company's original promises.

Last January a Playskool employee sent Mayor Harold Washington an anonymous letter warning that the factory would be closed. City officials passed the information on to James S. Lemonides, executive director of the Greater North Pulaski Development Corporation, a private organization of businesses, banks and community representatives promoting the economy of the area, which is largely black and Hispanic on the south, working-class white ethnic farther north. Lemonides expected and thought he got a candid answer, since Playskool president George Volanakis was a director of the development corporation. Volanakis told him that despite losses from write-off of an unsuccessful video game division, Milton Bradley had a \$12 million profit in 1983 on its continuing operations, and Playskool had racked up the highest sales and profits in its history. Since traditional preschool toys are now one of the hottest fields in the industry, Playskool sales and profits are expected to continue to zoom upward. Volanakis said, "both Milton Bradley and Playskool were very profitable and there was no reason on earth they would shut down a profitable operation," Lemonides recounted. Also, a year ago during negotiations with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), which represents about 470 Playskool production workers, union joint board president Nick Jones says he was told that "Playskool was solid as a rock. They never once asked us to enter into any concessionary bargaining."

Yet during this time Milton Bradley officials were preparing to close the Chicago factory and move it either to a non-union factory in New Jersey or an under-utilized plant at East Longmeadow, Mass. Earlier this fall, RWDSU local officials representing the Massachusetts factory, along with national union representatives, negotiated work rule concessions in order to win relocation of the Chicago jobs. They never consulted or even informed their Chicago fellow unionists. "That stings," Jones said. "We should have had a lot more warning. We've been treated like orphans."

On September 7 Hasbro Industries bought Milton Bradley. Twelve days later it announced the Chicago plant would be shut down, starting in December. Hasbro chairman Stephen Hassenfeld told reporters he had been reluctant to do so, but the Milton Bradley study convinced him. Senior vice-president for finance Al Verrechia insisted that the Chicago factory was inefficient, especially in its layout, and there were problems with a crumbling 1967 addition. (Earlier this year Milton

do my job — I think I deserve more." But most workers were passively resigned to their fate. "Of course it's not right," said Chris Dovichi, whose husband is also losing his job, "but, hey, we're one of the little people. We can't do anything. The big guys make all the decisions."

But workers weren't the only ones angry. Local press and even business reaction has been hostile, largely because of Playskool's IRB. "This was just a case of a large corporation getting easy dollars wherever it could get them, and then walking away," said Lemonides, who was particularly angry at the duplicity of his own board member. "The objective of big companies is just to make more money." Other businesses in the area "have supported everything we've done," he said. "They've said we shouldn't let [Playskool] get away with this. This plant was profitable and probably didn't need the money. That adds insult. It's just the corporate arrogance that's pissed everybody off."

"I think it's one of the more blatant breaches of public trust by a private corporation that I've seen," city commissioner of economic development Rob Mier said. Mier wants Hasbro to allow a three-member local business team to review its decision. If that fails to change the decision, the city has a local buyer who is interested if he can get the equipment and a contract to market through Hasbro. "We're willing to listen to any offer," Verrechia said. "If they think they can make toys there competitively for Hasbro, we're willing to listen."

But the company broke off scheduled talks with the mayor, and few expect productive negotiations. The West Side Jobs Network, which is under contract with the city for an experimental program in early warnings of plant shutdowns, has helped launch a local boycott of Playskool, Milton Bradley and Hasbro products, such as G.I. Joe, Big Foot and Snugglybuns. But there is little money to make it effective, and the union feels its modest severance package for employ-



In mid-November employees and committee supporters demonstrated in front of a Chicago Toys 'R' Us store.

ees would be jeopardized if it officially fought the closing. The Jobs Network has also demanded reparations from Hasbro if the factory closes.

The big gun waiting in reserve is a lawsuit by the city against Playskool on the grounds of fraud. The city would ask for an injunction that would at least buy time. With business and establishment criticism of Playskool high, the risk of offending business — one of the political considerations the city feels it must weigh — should be low. For the future, Mier said the city will try to write industrial revenue bonds in a way that gives the city stronger rights (all of which are now assigned to the bond buyer), to monitor job results of IRB's more closely and to institute a first source hiring policy that would require businesses to give a first chance to hard-core unemployed from training programs. But Mier thinks anything resembling local plant closing legislation would be destructive.

Although New Bedford, Mass., successfully used the threat of taking over the Morse Cutting Tool factory through the right of eminent domain — eventually leading corporate owner Gulf & Western to sell to another buyer rather than close — Mier argued Chicago doesn't have the money to buy Playskool.

Communities around the country are trying new tactics in a difficult battle. Last week the Illinois Appellate Court upheld a Circuit Court injunction prohibiting U.S. Steel from dismantling its South Works mill until a feasibility study for alternative ownership is completed, the result of a suit by the Illinois Attorney General and the Steelworkers union. In Minneapolis a community, church, labor and farmer coalition has called for a nationwide boycott of Northrup King seeds and all products of its international conglomerate owner, Sandoz (such as Ovaltine and Ex-Lax), to fight the closing of a 175-worker factory. In recent months workers at a Charleston, S.C., General Electric plant have called for a conversion study, and workers at Bridgeport Brass Company in Seymour, Conn., have investigated an employee buy-out to stop scheduled plant closings.

Each tactic may have its limits, but together they suggest continued vitality in the difficult battle to control corporate investment decisions, a battle that must be fought on all fronts — political, legislative pressure, legal challenges, collective bargaining and direct worker action, consideration of alternative ownership, consumer and community support, and the education of workers and the public that something can and should be done.

## THE STORY INSIDE

Bradley won a \$6.3 million lawsuit against the contractor for defective construction.) Nevertheless, "as far as we know, the people at Playskool were efficient and did a fine job," Verrechia said. But Lemonides said that former Playskool president Volanakis, who recently resigned, said that one-fourth of the expected \$10 million annual savings would come from reduced labor costs. Verrechia said that would result from eliminating around 200 jobs, but Volanakis reportedly said that wage rates would be substantially lower as well.

The decision hurt. Three-fourths of the workers were black or Hispanics, 60 percent women. The work force was stable and fairly content. Hourly pay averaged \$7.26, a bit above the industry average of \$6. Office worker Atlene Lofton thought there should be legislation to prohibit such sudden closings. "I hate to get up and go to work and be told I don't have a job when we should have been told months before. People like me who never take a day off, are very determined,

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By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

IN ITS NOVEMBER 17 REPORT on the race for Senate majority leader, the conservative newsweekly *Human Events* declared Kansas Sen. Robert Dole, an early favorite, out of the running. "His chances seem to have faded," *Human Events* reported, while Idaho Sen. Jim McClure now has "the best chance to win."

But when Senate Republicans met on November 28 to choose a successor to retiring majority leader Sen. Howard Baker, Dole got the most votes and McClure the least.

*Human Events* was not alone in believing that McClure, the most conservative of the candidates, would win. Like many political observers here, they reasoned that President Ronald Reagan's landslide victory had demonstrated the hold of conservatives over the national party and that the Senate would follow suit in choosing McClure, the candidate most philosophically compatible with the president. But Dole's election and the election of Pennsylvania Sen. John Heinz and Rhode Island Sen. John Chafee to other party leadership positions bears out the extent to which the party is still split between "Main Street moderates" and "New and Old Right conservatives."

While the conservatives clearly dominate the national party — witness Reagan's nomination in 1980 and conservative control of the party platform — the Main Streeters continue to provide the leadership in Congress.

The difference between the two factions is both regional and historical. The Main Street Republicans, based largely in the Midwest, stem from Ohio Sen. Robert Taft's loyal opposition to the New Deal. Their goal was not to rollback but to moderate the New and Fair Deals. Theirs was a politics of compromise and eventual accommodation to liberal Democratic rule.

They also saw the Republicans as the party of Lincoln, joining liberal Democrats to pass civil rights measures against the opposition of Southern Democrats.

Conservative Republicans date back to Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater's conquest of the nomination in 1964. They see themselves as a militant opposition to the New Deal and the welfare state. And they have consistently opposed civil rights legislation, beginning with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

But even after Reagan's landslide in 1980, Main Street Republicans controlled most of the key Congressional posts: Baker was majority leader, Dole the chair of the Finance Committee, Oregon's Sen. Mark Hatfield the chair of the Appropriations Committee and Illinois Rep. Robert Michel the House Minority leader. Even the National Republican Senatorial Committee, which dispenses funds to Senate candidates, was controlled by Main Streeter Heinz.

Last week's vote not only confirmed but extended the Main Streeters' control over Congress. With Dole becoming majority leader, Oregon's Sen. Robert Packwood becomes Finance Committee chair. Heinz turned back a challenge from conservative Wyoming Sen. Malcolm Wallop, and Chafee, considered on the far left of the party, bested conservative Utah Sen. Jake Garn to become head of the Senate Republican Conference.

### Senators vote convictions.

If the Senate elections had been conducted with the television cameras rolling, the Main Street Republicans probably would have been defeated. But they are held in private with a secret ballot, which mitigates the influence of New Right special-interest groups on the legislators. For once, the senators can simply vote their conviction.

The Senate elections show that in private most senators have little patience with religious fundamentalism, populist and supply-side conservatism, and doctrinaire opposition to the welfare state. Even conservative Republicans privately express contempt for North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms and Georgia Rep. Newt Gingrich, who prior to the Senate vote accused Dole of being the

# With Dole selection, Main Streeters best conservatives



Dole's strongest opponents are probably on the Republican right.

"tax collector for the welfare state." They share the Main Streeters' concern about the deficit, the explosive growth of military spending and the evisceration of social programs. They want a leadership that can work with, but also advise and even challenge, the Reagan administration.

And with Dole, they definitely chose such a leader.

Dole has always been known for his wit. When his wife Elizabeth was made secretary of transportation, he remarked, "I regret that I have only one wife to give to my country." But his political stance has changed dramatically over the last decade. Once seen as a Republican "hatchet man," he is now widely respected by liberal Democrats like former Sen. George McGovern as well as by conservative Republicans. Dole's strongest opponents are probably on the Republican right rather than the Democratic left.

When Dole was a Congressman from 1960 to 1968, he voted against all the Johnson administration anti-poverty proposals. For four years, he received a zero rating from the liberal Americans for Democratic Action. When he became a senator in 1968, he was one of the most outspoken defenders of the Nixon administration's conduct of the war in Vietnam. He championed Nixon's nomination of segregationists Clement F. Haynsworth and G. Harrold Carswell to the Supreme Court. In 1971, the administration rewarded him with the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee, a post from which he

lambasted 1972 Democratic nominee McGovern as a "tool of organized labor" and an "advocate of centralized power." Even among his Republican colleagues he gained a reputation for "meanness."

But in 1976, when President Gerald Ford tabbed him as his running mate, Dole's strident partisanship proved his undoing. Dole's witty but acerbic performance in his debate with rival Vice Presidential candidate Walter Mondale was believed by Republicans to have lost votes for Ford — even, perhaps, to have cost Ford the election.

### The new Dole.

After 1976, a different Dole emerged. Serving on McGovern's agricultural subcommittee on nutrition, Dole became one of the principal proponents of food stamp legislation and other proposals to feed the hungry. In 1981, after Sen. Helms had assumed control of the Agriculture Committee and was trying to gut the food stamp program, Dole led the battle to save and even expand it.

Dole became a leader of the Republican attempt to win back black voters. In 1982 he played the key role in preventing conservatives from weakening the Voting Rights Act. He also attempted to modify the most Draconian cuts in social spending proposed by the Reagan administration.

Dole's most important contribution was as chair of the Finance Committee. Having successfully steered the administration's tax plan through the Senate in 1981, he won support in 1982 — against the opposition

of the administration and of conservatives in his own party — for a substantial reform in that legislation that eliminated the most egregious giveaways to business and the wealthy. In winning passage of his proposal, Dole's major ally was Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy.

Dole has by no means become a liberal. His views reflect a Kansas Republicans' obsession with deficits and abstract fascination with the free market. But having toyed with the Goldwater wing of the party, Dole has become a typical and unusually competent representative of traditional Midwest Republicanism.

As Senate majority leader, Dole will face obstacles more formidable than those that Baker faced in the Reagan administration's first term. Economic figures released after the election suggest that the deficit for fiscal year 1985 will be larger than the \$180 billion projected by the administration and that a new recession may occur as early as this winter. Economists are already calling the current turn-down in business investment a "growth recession."

The increase in the deficit, combined with the president's pledge not to raise taxes, will cause immense problems for Dole. On the one hand, the administration appears divided and confused on its own course of action. Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan's remarkably progressive tax reform proposal, unveiled the day before the Senate election, was greeted with disinterest by the president, as if it were a submission from a little known thinktank in Montana.

On the other hand, Democrats, stung by Reagan and the Republicans' use of the tax issue against them in November, are determined to make the administration and the Senate leadership take whatever blame accrues from a tax increase proposal. It is unlikely that Dole will again be able to assemble the kind of bipartisan coalition that passed his 1982 reform proposal.

Dole will also face a Congress that most Republicans and Democrats believe has become virtually ungovernable. The autocracy of Lyndon Johnson's day has been replaced by egalitarian anarchy. Johnson used to exercise control through the seniority system, through dispensing funds to party members up for re-election and through the strict hierarchy of committees. If junior senators made waves, they could be denied campaign money and measures important to their state.

But the seniority system has been largely abandoned. Senators now finance their campaigns independently, and TV and direct mail have made it possible for a junior senator to defy the leadership, as Wisconsin Republican Robert Kasten did in 1982 when he led a fight against Dole's attempt to withhold taxes on interest and dividend income. With the proliferation of new committees and subcommittees, and with the growth of the Senate staff, each senator now has his or her own power base.

While Johnson and other past majority leaders had to negotiate with the administration and the opposition party to pass legislation, Dole will have to negotiate with the members of his own party. Dole, who still harbors presidential ambitions for 1988, may soon wish that he had never been chosen majority leader.

**Sen. majority leader Robert Dole will now face many formidable obstacles.**



# IN SHORT

## A less-than-intimate accord

A multi-union campaign against notoriously anti-union Litton Industries lost steam in December of last year when a joint labor-management committee was set up to study labor law violations at the \$4.7 billion-a-year conglomerate. After a year's worth of work, the committee claims two successes: the negotiation of a United Electrical Workers contract in a South Dakota microwave oven assembly plant that was four years in the making, and improved relations between labor and management in a New Britain, Connecticut plant. The committee was unsuccessful though in mediating a 16-month dispute at a Union/Butterfield cutting tool plant in Athol, Massachusetts.

While claiming these successes and applauding Litton's attempt to cease its union abuses, Lesley Israel of the AFL-CIO says the committee was not a panacea, just a good first step. Litton is not going to tell its subsidiaries to lie down and go to bed with the unions, but they have made a promise not to step outside the law. The committee intends to stay operating for another year, to make sure that Litton doesn't renege.

## Ambush in Tegucigalpa

Thirteen Nicaraguan Indians were detained and then deported from Honduras Thanksgiving weekend, reports Graham Clarke. The exiled leaders were en route to a meeting in eastern Honduras called to reunify two Nicaraguan Indian rebel groups and to prepare them for upcoming peace talks with the Sandinista government. The arrested were all members of the Indian organization Misurasata and included Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera. Rivera's return to Nicaragua in October had led to the first peace accord between the Sandinistas and the head of an armed opposition group.

Rivera said a Honduran colonel had assured him in mid-November that he would be permitted to attend the eastern Honduran meeting. But last week he reportedly received a conflicting message from the Honduran ambassador in Washington, who cautioned Rivera about the trip because his security could not be guaranteed. It is not yet known what impact, if any, the arrests in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa will have on the Miskito-Sandinista peace process.

## Carry on, Carnoy

Martin Carnoy failed to unseat Republican incumbent Ed Zschau as Silicon Valley's "high-tech" congressman in the recent elections, but supporters of the Democratic challenger claimed they achieved at least two of their campaign goals, reports David Beers. They say Zschau, who traditionally toed the Reagan line, was pressured to vote more moderately on important issues during the campaign, and that Carnoy, a Stanford economics professor who co-authored *Economic Democracy*, has built a network of support that could eventually put him in office.

In a district that voted strongly for Reagan, the former electronics businessman Zschau garnered 61 percent of the vote, Carnoy 36 percent. Zschau had declared in the final days of the campaign that he would run for Senate in 1986 but now claims that he will seek one more term in Congress, then return to business in 1988. Carnoy says he definitely plans to run again, and in the meantime will continue to espouse his alternative high-tech vision, which includes a national industrial policy that shifts government technology contracts from military to civilian purposes (see *In These Times*, Oct. 3). "Martin mobilized a lot of people in an issue-oriented campaign," Carnoy aide told *In These Times*. "We plan to keep that movement alive, organizing around the issues of nuclear disarmament, peace in Central America, cleaning up the local environment and education. Carnoy will be speaking up, calling attention to Zschau's voting record and attempting to remain in the public eye to make sure that when he next runs there will be a strong organization in place to back him." Carnoy is upbeat about his first foray into electoral politics, and noted "Since the campaign began, Zschau switched his vote on the MX missile and accepted the need for federal involvement in our local groundwater problems. I think we can take some credit on those two issues."

## The tyranny of abnormality

Last month's election was house-cleaning time for one Massachusetts state senate seat. The second Middlesex District, made up of the blue-collar cities of Somerville and Medford, had been wracked by repeated charges of political corruption, including Rep. Vincent Piro's attempted extortion charge. Piro decided to run for state senator despite the charge, and a mid-October hung jury induced his Democratic primary opponent, Salvatore Albano, to re-enter the race. Albano had lost to Piro in the September primary by 233 votes.

This time with the help of the unresolved charge and a massive voter turnout, the tables were turned, reports Frank Hornstein. With 84 percent of the voters casting ballots, Albano squeaked by Piro with the help of an impressive coalition of union and neighborhood activists, feminists and senior citizens. And all on a write-in campaign. Piro laid the blame where it belonged: on the "bearded types" who backed Albano. He told the *Boston Globe*, "You could see them out there with the Mondale signs, you know the types, the ones with the beards... In the middle of the city where normal families live I did tremendous. The city is going to the left and the normal people are going to leave." Piro failed to comment on the large motivated turnout, however, which reflected Albano's belief that the "normal people" wanted rent control, rules reform in the legislature and an end to the corrupt machine politics of the district.

— Beth Maschinot

## No nukes in New York?

NEW YORK — Four weeks ago the New York City Council declared the city a "nuclear weapons-free zone" but so far it seems that the action will have little or no effect on the Navy's plans to station a nuclear battleship in one of the city's five boroughs, Staten Island. In a resolution sponsored by Brooklyn Councilman Abraham Gerges and opposed by the Staten Island councilmembers, the council prohibited "the production, transport, storage, placement or deployment of nuclear weapons within the territorial limits of the city of New York."

Like the 77 other nuclear weapon-free zones in the United States, the local declarations are not legally binding. "It does not have the force of law," Gerges said after the council vote on November 9. "We are preempted by the federal government — but it does

show the feelings of the people of the city of New York." Of the 33 members in the council, 26 supported Gerges, 4 opposed and 3 abstained.

Gerges introduced the resolution three months before the Navy selected New York as the site for its new port (see *In These Times*, Oct. 17). "My intention was not to focus on the Navy, it's a broader resolution," he said. But the Navy is the only government agency which might violate the objectives of the resolution. Gerges promised four weeks ago that he would send a copy of the resolution to the Navy: "I'm telling them we don't want nuclear weapons here." But he later backed down, saying, "We never send resolutions around... it's public record, anyone can get a copy."

One reason why Gerges might have changed his mind, according to sources inside the council, is that there is a separate resolution — also non-binding — against the port. The anti-port resolution, sponsored by Miriam Friedlander of Manhattan's Lower East Side,

specifically states the council's opposition to nuclear weapons on board ships in New York harbor. An unusual city-wide petitioning campaign has collected more than 40,000 signatures from New Yorkers in favor of the Friedlander resolution. Support has also come from a third of the council, more than 150 religious, peace and community groups, and the newspaper of the Brooklyn/Queens Catholic diocese.

Yet the council leadership (which, along with Mayor Ed Koch, supports the Navy port) had blocked the Friedlander resolution and prevented a vote by the full council. Anti-nuclear activists recently held a lobbying day, coordinated by the New York Public Interest Research Group, to convince each council member to vote against the nuclear port.

"I hope the nuclear weapons-free zone resolution will lay a base of support for the anti-port resolution," Friedlander says, "because we've got to be more concrete. We must be sure it applies to the Navy." — Susan Jaffe



NEW YORK — Several hundred women from six northeastern states protested "corporate crimes against women," at the New York Stock Exchange on November 19. After blocking entrances, 102 were arrested on disorderly conduct charges and 68 were freed after they wouldn't give their names. The demonstration was organized by a group called "Not in Our Name," made up of women from Women's Pentagon Action, Mobilization for Survival, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, War Resisters League, and other organizations. "We are here...to proclaim that corporate exploitation, militarism, violence against women and racism and sexism...are not in our name," the women said in a statement. "We will not allow these atrocities to continue, not in our name." Police began making arrests as frustrated stock brokers searched for a way into the exchange building.

## Butter beats guns in L.A.

LOS ANGELES — Voters here passed Proposition X by an overwhelming 61 percent, revealing a majority sentiment against the Reagan administration's excessive levels of military spending and aid to right-wing regimes, and for public involvement in deciding how the

city's tax dollars and labor is used. Running well ahead of the Mondale-Ferraro vote in LA, Proposition X demonstrated that citizens were frustrated with the caution of the Democratic Party and responded to vigorous open debate about an issue that was so studiously avoided at national level.

Proposition X is a binding resolution, instructing the LA City Council to call upon the Congress and the President to "make more federal money available for jobs"

in the non-military public and private sectors, to reduce tax dollars "spent on nuclear weapons, wasteful military programs, and military aid to undemocratic governments known to violate human rights." The proposition now requires the City Council to produce an annual report showing how many tax dollars go to the military, the impact on the local economy, and what would happen if a big chunk of those dollars were invested in jobs in housing, health and human ser-

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



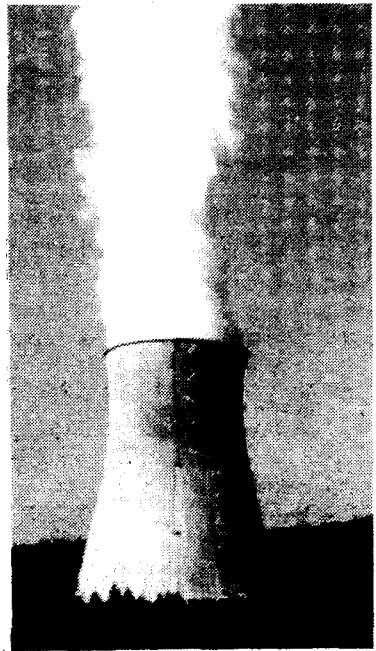


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vices, public transportation and the arts.

Proposition X organizers' main task was to counter "job blackmail" — a fear reinforced by statements like Caspar Weinberger's claim that "if you cut military spending by \$30 billion you throw 300,000 people out of work." This line of reasoning is especially potent in LA county, a county that receives more military dollars than any other in the nation. In fact, one out of every eight jobs in Southern California depends on the military.

So for months last year the organizers went from union local to union local — many heavily de-



Ancil Nance

pendent on military contracts — discussing alternatives to a military buildup that keeps the present economy running.

By election time they had earned the endorsement of the 750,000-member County Federation of Labor. County Federation of Labor President William Robertson said that the proposition was an "experiment to determine what would happen to [the union members'] views if the job blackmail argument is taken away from the military buildup equation. We believe too much money is being shoved down the military drain needlessly and that more union members would agree with that if their jobs were not at stake."

Initiated by a group of union workers and retirees, the Proposition X effort soon included strong black and Latino support, along with help from peace and environmental leaders. They emphasized the Reagan administration's support of dictatorships which ban unions and keep wages down (attracting more and more American firms and jobs), the extent to which the military industry's economic and political power influence national policy, and the on-going depression for millions of Americans and Los Angelenos due to military spending.

Proposition X proponents quickly gathered over 170,000 signatures, making it the first ballot measure to qualify by petition in Los Angeles in 45 years. This fall, utilizing their street-wisened signature gatherers, the campaign registered over 49,000 new voters. They then set up an elaborate precinct-by-precinct effort for election day which resulted in an 81% turnout of eligible voters in targeted areas.

As Proposition X organizers prepare to monitor the City Council's report, the debate in LA will continue to heat up. Supporters believe that what began in the workplaces and neighborhoods of this

city will spread around the country as more people find themselves battling the real Ronald Reagan over control of the nation's resources, jobs and military policies.

— Richard Grossman

## The necessity of protest

BURLINGTON, VT—Twenty-six anti-war activists were acquitted Nov. 16 of unlawful trespass by a Vermont jury who, by implication, indicted the Reagan Administration's Central American policies. The demonstrators used a rare tactic called the "necessity defense." They said their three-day occupation of a senator's office last March was done to prevent a greater crime — the continued killing of Salvadoran civilians.

During the summation, the State's Attorney claimed that U.S. involvement south of the border had "not been on trial." Turning over a map of Central America to reveal a sketch of Sen. Robert Stafford's office, he said, "It's what happened here" that's important. But a defense attorney flipped back the *National Geographic* map to cover the office sketching. "We think the issue is very much what's happening in Central America," she stated. It took the jury one-and-a-half hours to agree with the defense. The state is not expected to appeal the decision.

During the four-day trial the paneled courtroom took on the air of a classroom. The subjects were U.S. foreign policy, international law, and the right of citizens to petition their government. More than 20 defense witnesses, including former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, took the stand to testify.

Two Salvadoran refugees told of family and friends being murdered by government death squads. Gladys Sanchez (a pseudonym) spoke of a friend who "disappeared." She was later found in a cotton field with her breasts cut off and face burned by acid.

John Stockwell, one of two former CIA agents testifying, recounted his 1976 role as commander of covert operations in Angola. One third of his staff were propagandists whose job was to "successfully introduce false stories into the American media." He said that the "CIA dominates foreign policy completely in Central America today."

Many legal observers were surprised that Judge Frank Mahady charged the jury to consider international law. "It's significant that a Vermont judge did this," said one lawyer, "while Reagan has ignored the World Court ruling" on the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

Defendants, spectators and some jurors burst into tears when the jury announced the "not guilty" verdict. "A conservative Vermont jury heard facts about Central America that were unknown to them," said Olin McGill, a defense attorney. "They concluded that the defendants were right to take action to try to stop patently illegal conduct by the U.S. government in Central America," he said as the acquitted rushed to hug one another. "Although we won tonight," McGill cautioned, "bombs will still fall on civilian villages tomorrow."

— Graham Clarke

Hundreds of pages of court documents allege that the federal government, Dow Chemical Corporation and Rockwell International contaminated some 2,000 acres of land surrounding the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant, eight miles south of Boulder. The documents, drawn from federal sources, also assert that the government and its weapons contractors covered up contaminating accidents, repeatedly misled and deceived the public and, to this day, have not cleaned up much of the radioactive waste at the factory site.

After nearly a decade of litigation, the civil court case exposing these allegations finally is coming to an end. Landowners whose property abuts the weapons factory filed suit in 1975, asking \$186 million in damages. Trial is scheduled for January, but efforts to settle the case out of court are now underway.

The landowners, Perry and Charles McKay, say the contamination stems from two major plutonium fires and from decades of waste disposal that "frequently resembled the mountain miners' solution — shoving the waste out the door and down the hill." They claim those fires released more than a ton of plutonium into the environment. (Lung cancers from plutonium are calculated in doses measured in billionths of a gram.)

The defendants — the government, Dow and Rockwell — don't deny they contaminated the land. They argue instead that the extent of contamination neither poses a health hazard nor materially affects the property. They say operation of Rocky Flats has always complied with changing federal standards. But in any case, they add, the courts have no jurisdiction.

Tens of tons of plutonium have been processed, machined or otherwise manufactured at Rocky Flats, the plaintiffs say. They add that on the order of 1,000 to 10,000 plutonium bomb components — each one containing several kilograms or more of plutonium — are fabricated there each year, then shipped to other factories where they are joined with other bomb components.

During more than 30 years of production, Rocky Flats has "operated in nearly total secrecy and nondisclosure," the plaintiffs claim. When contamination occurred, factory officials — rather than evaluating the full extent of releases and trying to rectify the problems — instead covered up the incidents, making "misleading statements inconsistent with secret internal reports," they allege.

Documents reveal "hundreds" of fires have occurred at the factory including two major ones in 1957 and 1969. The 1957 fire occurred in building 771, the main plutonium-processing facility. Between 28 and 42 kilograms of plutonium were in the room where the fire began. The exhaust filters, almost all of which burned, contained possibly more plutonium, much of which was released into the atmosphere.

The plaintiffs, who were forced to rely on the government for all their information, had requested a residue sample from the stack of 771 to ascertain how much radioactive material the fire released. The government's response to this request, according to the records, was inconsistent. Sometimes officials said "they

## Briefing: Landowners sue over "hot" property



knew of no soot." Sometimes they said that extracting it would endanger the workers and public.

But in May 1983, Rockwell cleaned the 771 stack and shipped the residue to Idaho for burial. Several months later, the company informed the plaintiffs that they would have to pay \$3,500 per barrel for exhumation and testing if they didn't care to rely on the government's analysis of the material.

About one ton of plutonium

burned in the 1969 fire, plaintiffs claim. An unknown quantity was released into the atmosphere. The building in which it happened, the largest plutonium-processing facility, wasn't designed to meet minimum Atomic Energy Commission fire and safety standards, its fire alarms were obsolete, and the roof was held in place with concrete blocks, plaintiffs assert.

After the 1969 fire, the Colorado and Jefferson County health departments began monitoring the area for radiation. Strontium and cesium 137 were found — fission products which might indicate a criticality accident had occurred. Criticality means that a nuclear chain reaction was initiated. The defendants stoutly deny this ever happened.

In addition to these two fires, the plaintiffs, again basing their claims on the government's own documents, charge that contamination has resulted from the factory's "negligent" waste management. In the early years, radioactive waste was stored in buildings. Later it was stored on loading docks, outdoor slabs and in fields. Twenty-six outdoor storage sites have been identified.

Rocky Flats has "ignored warnings that contamination would occur, used inadequate or no technology to prevent contamination, failed to monitor for radiation, ignored or covered up contamination, waited years before taking corrective action (and) cleaned up not because of health or environment concerns but because of adverse publicity," the plaintiffs allege.

"I don't think we were ever quite that callous about it," said the Department of Energy's Dave Jackson. "Certainly there were some contamination problems on site," he said, mentioning leaking barrels. "If we had to do it all over again, sure we'd like to try to do it better and more effectively." Factory personnel, he said, were just following the regulations of the times.

"There's no question" that factory operations contaminated the area, Jackson said. "It's public record," and Rocky Flats officials have taken various actions to mitigate the damages by moving earth, paving and hauling out waste. "The evaluation of the effects of contamination are another thing entirely," he stressed.

This August, the government, Dow and Rockwell called for an out-of-court settlement. Their request came just days after Denver District Court Judge Richard P. Matsch ruled that because of the "ultra-hazardous" activity of the weapons factory, the defendants were "strictly liable." Strict liability means plaintiffs need not prove negligence, just the facts of contamination.

Matsch's decision reversed a ruling he made in 1982 that had dismissed the landowners' claims. In 1983, on appeal by the landowners, 10th Circuit Court Judge William P. Doyle overturned the dismissal. Doyle said that "despite the importance of national defense," pre-empting the government from liability would leave the landowners without remedy.

— S.K. Levin



## IN THE NATION

## LABOR

## Postal service squeezes workers

By Katherine Sciacchitano

WASHINGTON

**O**N DECEMBER 10 THE NATIONAL Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) are scheduled to begin arbitration of their contract with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

Negotiations for a new contract broke off in July over the Postal Service's demand for a wage freeze and a 30 percent pay cut for new employees. The Postal Service is currently seeking a 23 percent cut, while the unions want a 9 percent increase over three years.

The USPS has run budget surpluses — the first in its history — in three of the last five years and is not hiding its strong balance sheet. Instead, it is arguing that its statutory responsibility to pay wages "comparable" to those in the private sector means lowering them to match recent wage concessions by other workers. According to the Postal Service, failure to lower wages could leave it vulnerable to "de facto deregulation" via competition from the private sector and threaten its mandate to provide universal mail service.

While the number of two-tier contracts — contracts with lower pay rates or benefits for new hires — is on the increase, they are still rare. An arbitration award that endorsed the Postal Service's position and imposed a two-tier wage structure on the workforce of a presently viable employer could seriously undermine the ability of unions in both the public and private sectors to resist two tiers in upcoming rounds of negotiations.

Although employers argue that two tiers are a painless way to cut wages because they affect only future employees, two tiers undermine union principles of equal pay for equal work and lower the wages of older as well as newer workers by intensifying workforce divisions and weakening solidarity. They also intensify wage competition in industries where they are found. Workers at Phelps Dodge and Louisiana Pacific companies have been on strike for over a year against two-tier demands. Postal workers, who form a highly unionized career workforce and have a lot to lose from the Postal Service proposal, would likely follow suit



if it were not for the example of the 1981 PATCO strike. Their job security and retirement benefits already differ by date of hire.

But the USPS, which is represented by the anti-union law firm of Littler, Mendelson, Fastiff and Tishey, has suffered two early blows to its proposed package. The first came when Congress blocked its attempt in early August to unilaterally implement its new hire proposal. The second resulted from impartial fact-finding reports in pre-arbitration proceedings of two smaller postal unions, the Mail Handlers and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association. Both reports held that the Postal Service had failed to justify the need either for a wage freeze or for lower rates for new hires. In addition, the NRLCA report found that the principle of equal pay for equal work precluded ordering a two tier system.

The APWU and NALC, who waived

their fact finding proceedings, maintain that postal workers are not overpaid and continue to press for a raise. Twenty-five percent of the postal workforce are women and 27 percent are minorities.

The unions argue that once the relative absence of wage discrimination in the Postal Service is taken into consideration, wages are comparable to those in the private sector for similar work. They also claim that their working conditions are similar to those in the hazardous industrial sector and that postal wages should not be pegged to the largely non-union service sector, which the Postal Service included in its calculations of a 23 percent wage differential.

According to the unions, the greatest threat to the survival of the Postal Service comes not from allegedly "noncompetitive" postal wages, but from the USPS practice of subcontracting profitable portions of its

operations. While the Postal Service claims that a significant threat may emerge from the growth of telecommunications in the private sector, the unions emphasize that serious competition from electronic communications such as computer generated mail and electronic funds transfers is unlikely to materialize for several decades.

The arbitration panel is likely to rule for the unions. But the unions' denial that competition exists from the telecommunications industry may harm their long-run ability to protect the wages and jobs of their members. The Postal Service believes it can compete with emerging telecommunications technology by making its current operations more efficient, particularly by lowering labor costs, which are 80 percent of its operating budget. If efficient competition became impossible, the Postal Service would leave postal functions to the private sector.

But many experts predict a permanent drop in mail volume by the 1990s and the emergence of private telecommunications networks that could threaten postal revenues and universal service. Postal wages would have little effect on the survival of the Postal Service under these conditions since unit labor costs have been falling in both the Postal Service and telecommunications industry. Given the persistence of the Reagan administration in privatizing governmental functions for the sake of profit and the Postal Service's apparent agreement with this position, the postal unions' present belief may only lock them into a downward spiral of wage competition.

Dr. Dan Schiller of Temple University, who has written on the Postal Service in his book *Telematics and Government*, believes that one avenue for the unions would be to lobby Congress for a specific role for the Postal Service in a nationwide telecommunications network. He also says that it is critical for the unions to wage a campaign for public understanding of the threats to universal service from the telecommunications industry and the need for a governmental commitment to preserving postal service for the people.

But without a resurgence of union militancy, a battle to combat privatization could cost the unions their right to bargain collectively. Postal unions were not granted full collective bargaining rights until postal functions were transferred from the government to a semi-private corporation in 1970 by the Postal Reorganization Act. In exchange for expanded managerial autonomy, the act also required the Postal Service to balance revenues and costs and operate at a "profit" without government subsidies.

Between 1970 and the early-80s, union militancy, combined with productivity increases from automation, led to huge improvements in wages and substandard working conditions. Now, fighting privatization that could intensify wage competition would also mean undermining the rationale of private sector efficiency on which Congress first based its grant of union rights. ■

*Katherine Sciacchitano is a labor lawyer based in Washington.*

## HOMELESS

## New shelter law faces many hurdles

By Joan Walsh

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. IS ONE of the nation's most socially stratified cities, perhaps the most yuppified, and the battleground between the white well-to-do and the city's majority black, heavily poor population has long been housing. Pioneering white professionals have over the years pushed into lower-class enclaves — Dupont Circle in the 70s and now the racially diverse Adams-Morgan neighborhood — leaving the previous residents to crowd into substandard dwellings, or homeless altogether.

The battle has resulted in some victories for tenants, however — the city has some

of the toughest rent control, condo conversion and demolition laws in the country. And last month an initiative establishing a right to overnight shelter for the city's estimated 5,000 to 10,000 homeless was passed with 72 percent of the vote.

But the apparent voter mandate obscured significant opposition to the measure. Mayor Marion Barry is still challenging it in court, arguing that the initiative would force a city budget appropriation and is thus invalid. Perhaps more troublesome, the measure opened a rift among the city's homeless-advocacy groups over the question of what constitutes the best approach to the growing problem of homelessness.

Initiative 17 would allow the homeless to demand overnight shelter from the city, and sue if it is not provided. Currently the

city operates three shelters, but the vast majority of the estimated 2,000 beds available to the homeless are provided by private agencies. In the campaign's closing weeks, city officials launched an all-out assault on the measure, spending \$5,000 on vote-no posters and arguing in the media that its cost was prohibitive and it could attract homeless from other communities.

But the city's anti-17 campaign apparently had little effect on voters. "I think the initiative has changed the climate here," said Mitch Snyder of the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), the group that led the initiative drive. "Now it's not just advocacy groups—the people have articulated what they want the city to do."

Yet some advocacy groups remain unconvinced the initiative will do much to solve the problems of the city's homeless. The D.C. Coalition for the Homeless, an umbrella for church groups, shelter operators and social service providers, voted decisively, though not unanimously, to oppose 17 on the grounds that it "warehoused" the poor and neither provided the services they needed nor addressed the causes of their conditions.

"The city has funded shelters for a number of years, and of course there are not enough. But the coalition is concerned about what happens after you have shel-

ters," said Marie Nahikian, coalition chair. "The initiative may be an appropriate emergency response but it's not a long-term public policy, and I'm concerned about the creation of a permanent underclass, people who live in shelters for years and never make it the next step."

Nahikian and others argued that the initiative should have been more specific, addressing itself to two specific types of homeless — the deinstitutionalized mentally ill, and women, especially women with children.

Like many large cities, Washington has a sizeable population of people who were released from mental health facilities into communities and found no support structure when they got there. Studies estimate that up to 85 percent of the city's homeless suffer some form of mental illness, Nahikian said. "I would have liked to see the initiative call for improved mental health services, and some second-stage housing, to end the cycle of these people walking the streets by day and in shelters at night."

The other glaring need is safe facilities for homeless women and their children. Only one of the city's three shelters accepts women, and few of the private agencies have safe, private accommodations for women. Although most homeless people are single men, the number of women and

*Continued on page 8*



**W**HEN THE FIRST DRAFT OF the proposed pastoral letter on the U.S. economy was released in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 11, the committee of Catholic bishops who drew it up said they expected an immediate and "violent allergic reaction." They were correct. From both the right and left, the 120-page document has sparked sharper responses than did the first draft of the U.S. bishops' letter on war and peace some three years ago.

And with good reason. The draft advocates a substantially increased role for government in solving economic problems, and it is quite specific in some areas. It calls for a policy commitment to reduce the unemployment rate from its current 7 percent to 3 or 4 percent. It seeks an overhaul of the "woefully inadequate" welfare system. It says labor laws should be changed to help workers from unions and to protect them from employer intimidation. And it seeks a revision of foreign policy, with an emphasis on human needs rather than military expansionism.

The letter sharply condemns the "consumerist mentality which encourages immediate gratification and mortgages our future." And it warns Catholics, in particular, about leading a "spiritually schizophrenic existence in which our private lives are oriented toward Christian discipleship while our economic activities are devoid of these same values."

On the other hand, the first draft falls far short of critiquing the internal structural problems of modern capitalism, the role of banks and corporations in the plight of the Third World, or the inherent advantages provided to business and industry by the maintenance of a certain level of unemployment and welfare dependency in this country.

#### The right reacts.

The most agitated responses, as expected, seem to be coming from the right, with the objections taking three basic forms.

The first is that the Catholic bishops are not economists, don't know what they're talking about and have no business writing about secular matters. "The bishops," said Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, chairman of American Hospital Buildings, "are well meaning people who really don't understand our capitalistic system."

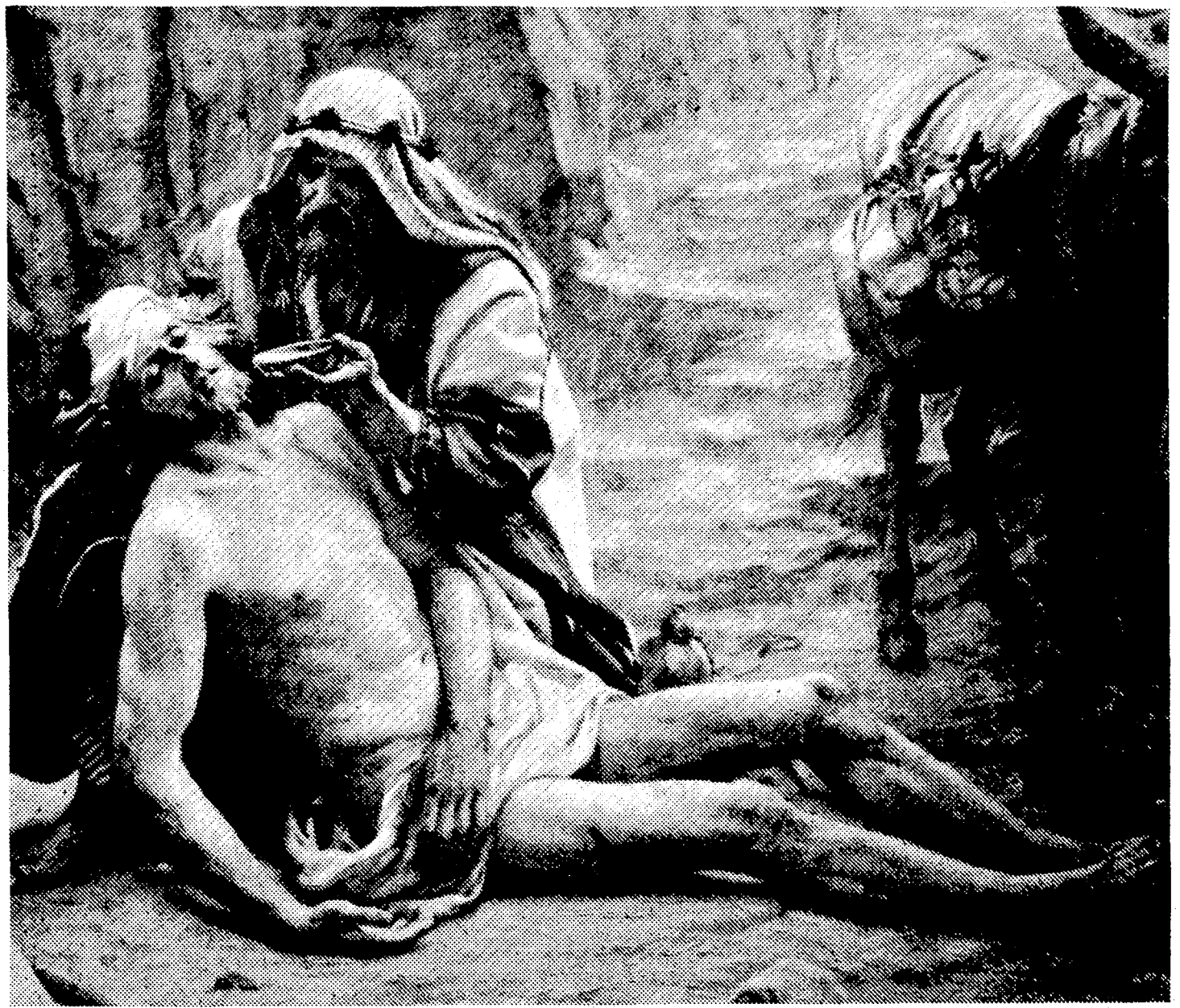
Scoffed columnist George Will, "With an almost comic sense of moral bravery and intellectual originality, they hurl clichés at problems that have proven intractable in the face of strenuous efforts by persons of intelligence and dedication."

"A soggy prescription for the U.S. economy," grouched Joseph Sobran, another syndicated columnist, referring to the draft. "It seeks to cover its intellectual nakedness with incessant references to the poor."

Anticipating the barrage, Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, chairman of the drafting committee, noted that its five members spent the better part of two years listening to 125 experts in labor, business, theology, economics and sociology as they attempted to formulate a comprehensive message. "Bishops do not approach economic questions as experts in economics," he said at the news conference after the draft was released. "But using the best data in the field, they reflect as teachers and pastors on the effects of both good and bad that the economy has on people."

Also defending the bishops' right to comment was liberal columnist Colman McCarthy. The bishops are preeminently qualified

**As anticipated, the most agitated responses seem to be coming from the right.**



## CAPITALISM

# Allergic reaction to bishops' letter

to speak about defects in the American system, he argued, since it is they who have the final responsibility in the country's 180 dioceses for "the Catholic run orphanages, old-age homes, schools, hospitals and homeless shelters" where "services are delivered in rosy times and hard." No other private organization, declared McCarthy, "has done more or risked more on behalf of those cruel and ingrained defects" in the U.S. economy.

The second objection is that the bishops are out of tune with their own Catholic people, most of whom seem well pleased with the economic status quo (a 7 percent increase in Catholic support for Ronald Reagan this November over 1980 providing one eye-opener). The bulk of American Catholics are no longer struggling immigrants but middle and upper-class achievers in business and government. They perceive their relative affluence as a sign of capitalism's success, and many resent suggestions that they ought to kill — or at least tie the wings — of the goose that lays the golden egg.

"Catholics aren't going to listen to these pontifications any more than they listen to the Church's outmoded ramblings on artificial birth control," a successful Chicago business man told *In These Times*.

Early letters to editors in major newspapers similarly reflected some resistance in the ranks. "The American people voted to continue and expand our present economic policies," wrote one bitter Catholic to the *Chicago Tribune*, "not to return to the socialist nonsense espoused by these con-ners of human misery."

Wrote another, "Could our bishops spend better time helping Mother Teresa pick up sick bodies in India and then write us a letter on charity where the real action is?"

The easy retort to these rejections is that the Catholic Church is not governed by the Gallup Poll but, ideally, by a sensitive interaction between an informed leadership and a thinking, responsive constituency. Weakland himself acknowledged that if the draft were put to a Catholic vote today, it

would probably be more soundly defeated than was Walter Mondale.

And Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that the just released draft should be considered a starting point, not a completed work. Speaking to his fellow bishops in Washington, he declared, "Our experience as pastors has validated the idea that a public opinion can be built to support justice for the poor. Our experience needs to be pressed in the wider public."

In other words, one purpose of the document itself and the hoped for subsequent dialog about it is to persuade Americans to examine and perhaps change their economic priorities in the light of the Bible, theology and common sense. That will not come easy, admitted Malone, in the face of "a declining hold of the poor on the mind of the nation," as reflected in many a public opinion poll.

#### In praise of capitalism.

The third and most substantive objection from the right is that although the bishops may indeed be qualified to speak and although the value of their judgments should not be predicated on the acceptance of their followers, their analysis of economic realities is simply wrong. That is clearly the position of the Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, which published its own 80-page statement four days before the bishops released theirs.

The 27 members of the commission including Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, William Simon, former U.S. treasury secretary, and Alexander Haig, former secretary of state, praised capitalism as the ideal economic manifestation of the Catholicism, since both are committed to the "elimination of tyranny and poverty." They also sang the praises of multi-national corporations, the profit motive and enlightened self-interest "properly understood."

"Enterprise is a virtue relatively neg-

lected by theologians," said the statement, "and the church has placed insufficient emphasis on the practical insight of the entrepreneur." The fact that "market failures" such as unemployment, poverty and a grossly inadequate distribution of the world's goods persist, declared the commission, is due to "unwarranted interference of the government in the free enterprise system" — the very kind of interference the bishops seem to want more of. Poverty is not primarily a problem of the state, according to the lay commission. "Government programs are most successful when they empower citizens and local associations to solve their own problems."

Said the statement, "We have learned through our own experience how precious are the liberties which encourage economic creativity and how easy it is to stifle those liberties through neglect, indifference, excessive state entanglement, imprudent regulation, a decline in capital formation and the unwise monetary, fiscal and credit policies of governments."

Implicit throughout the statement is the conviction that American capitalism whatever its strengths, is as fragile as a piece of red, white and blue china, and any alteration or reordering of priorities can shatter the system once and for all.

Wealth, it is contended, is found not so much in nature as in "Culture," which is described as "the distribution of human capital, including habits, skills, attitudes and ambitions." Which comes down to a scholarly variation of the old theme that poor people are poor because they are lazy and rich people have money because God helps those who help themselves.

The lay commission's position, written almost entirely by Novak, is already providing ammunition for commentators and columnists taking quick shots at the bishops' draft. "There is no reason this country couldn't be turned into an Ethiopia," warned the above mentioned Sobran, if the bishops succeed in obtaining government involvement in the free marketplace or other forms of social engineering.

Echoing Novak, George Will explained, "American capitalism is the most efficient anti-poverty machine the world has known." How dare the bishops, he asked, presume to tell this most successful society that its distribution of income "violates the minimum standard of distributive justice," just because a mere 45 million Americans live under the poverty line?

Weakland and his associates are not likely to respond specifically to this third category of objections. It is their hope that

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# Shelter

continued from page 6

families seeking shelter on an emergency basis is growing, and the city has been slow to respond.

"Many people felt if you're going to spend \$20 to \$25 million on a program like this, you ought to get more than just beds," Nahikian said.

But an initiative that included other services for the homeless would likely have run into more legal trouble than the already formidable obstacles facing Initiative 17. The District of Columbia charter prohibits initiatives that call for an appropriation of city funds, and city attorneys are arguing that Initiative 17 effectively does that, since more shelter for the homeless will require additional city expense.

Lawyers for CCNV argue that because the initiative attaches no dollar amount to its call for shelter, it is within its legal bounds. Because it addresses the mayor to use his discretionary funds, not the city council, it could stay out of the budgetary appropriation process altogether, says CCNV attorney Jeff Stake. And finally, CCNV argues that the cost to the city could be minimal, since housing more homeless could cut down on the emergency health services the city is forced to provide them, as well as the demand on city police and prisons.

The initiative's fate could be decided in the next two weeks, if a judge accepts the city's demand for summary judgment and

foregoes a trial. Even if it's struck down, advocates on both sides of the initiative say the campaign has forced the city to take more seriously the problems of the homeless. Barry has established a Commission on the Homeless and consolidated the city's emergency services into one agency affording the homeless and their advocates better access and more accountability.

The lasting impact of the rift within the advocacy community is less clear. CCNV has become an effective, high-profile advocate for the down-and-out, especially during the Reagan years. Its "Harvest of Shame" protests and encampments outside the White House resulted in hundreds of arrests but won concessions from the government, most notably an agreement to open up unused government buildings for shelter. A 51-day fast by the controversial, charismatic Snyder — which coincided with the Initiative 17 campaign — won a pledge from Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler to put millions of dollars into renovating CCNV's substandard and unsafe 800-bed shelter.

But CCNV's unorthodox approach — its unpaid members work by consensus, accept no government funds and eschew traditional coalition tactics — has often placed it outside the city's political community. There were also racial overtones to the Initiative 17 divisions — CCNV is mostly white, while the Coalition for the Homeless, and the Barry administration, is mainly black.

The polarization didn't show up in the vote, however — the black wards voted for the initiative, while it lost in many predominantly white sections. And the Coalition may have to work off the notion that it sided

with the city and not the homeless in the campaign, notes Keary Kincannon, a long-time housing advocate who resigned as the Coalition's executive director over its aggressive opposition to the initiative.

Housing expert Chester Hartman, at the Institute of Policy Studies, called the measure's passage "an overwhelming victory." Hartman favored the initiative as a first step toward building a consensus that shelter is a basic human right, but he's uncertain that message can be read in the vote for 17. "I'm not sure that it's really the beginning of a general move toward a 'right-to-housing' attitude. The homeless are a specific class of people — an extreme, visible case and a manageable number. You're not talking about permanent housing. That's a demand on the public treasury that people aren't willing to put up with."

## Bishops

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a discussion and dialog involving clergy and laity, experts and ordinary citizen, Catholics and non-Catholics, friend and foe, will clarify and refine the issues, so that the second draft, to be issued next summer, will have a sharper focus. The final document will be presented to the bishops and voted on in November 1985.

The discussion notwithstanding, there appears little chance of anything resembling a reconciliation between the Weakland and Novak schools of thought — their basic premises are too far apart. But the interac-

tion between the two months ahead should bring economics to the public consciousness on the disarmament question.

### And from the left...

The "allergic reaction" has not been altogether limited to the economic right. From a different direction come charges that the draft is a copout that does not go far enough in pointing fingers at the capitalistic villains in the marketplace. Indeed, short shrift is given in the draft to the gap between the affluent nations of the Northern hemisphere and the poor ones of the Southern, and no discussion of the deep-rooted causes of this imbalance is presented.

Said Penny Lernoux, Latin American writer for the *National Catholic Reporter*, "The document repeatedly notes that the United States has a responsibility to do something about economic inequalities, but it does so only within the narrow judgment that the U.S. economy is so powerful that it obviously 'has an enormous influence on the rest of the world.' Consequently, the solutions suggested, such as more aid to the poorest countries, are mere band-aids for structural problems often originating in the U.S."

"How," she asked, "are we to break through the dialog of the deaf that has characterized North-South meetings unless we first examine our role as a colonial power in many parts of the Third World, particularly Latin America?"

As a case in point, she cited the continuing exploitation of the world's 42 coffee-producing nations, which have been traditionally forced to accept prices imposed by the U.S. and Europe. The arrangement, noted Lernoux, is not governed by some benign law of supply and demand but by the needs of First World food producers who control 85 percent of the coffee market and reap most of the profits. By its failure to talk about social sin and identify social sinners, she said, the bishops' document "opts for pie-in-the-sky solutions."

As the draft is more widely read and its implications pondered, similar critiques can be expected from many segments of the Catholic Church that have never felt comfortable with a system that defends enlightened self-interest as God's chosen way to distribute the goods of the world.

And the comments of Pope John Paul II himself during his visit to Canada will provide further impetus to the critiques. "The poor South," thundered the pope, "will judge the rich North which assumes to itself the imperialistic monopoly of economic and political supremacy at the expense of others."

To be sure, the draft has received far more praise than criticism from the nation's media. But most of this is in the form of immediate courtesy reactions on the part of people who have not had the time to digest the 120 pages. The real fallout will come more slowly in the months ahead. At the very least, the variety of persons and organizations interested in the letter should guarantee that Novak, Will and Haig will not have the bishops' ear exclusively to themselves as the letter goes through its inevitable fermentation.

**Robert McClory**, a Chicago-based writer, writes for the *National Catholic Reporter*.

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By David Goodman

JOHANNESBURG

This is part one of a two-part series.

**A**T 3 A.M. ON OCTOBER 23, Johnson Mtumkulu of Sebokeng, a large black township outside of Johannesburg, was awakened by a loud knock at his door.

"There are four policemen, two black, two white. They say 'where is the revolver?' — but I haven't got one," he later told *The Capetown Argus*.

"So then I gave them my residence permit, but I had left my pass book at work. The police don't understand this and I have to get into the truck." Mtumkulu, who had never been arrested before, spent the next day in jail, where he was forced to clean prison toilets and the policemen's quarters.

This scene was repeated in more than 19,500 homes as a 7,000-man combined operation of the South African Police (SAP) and South African Defense Force (SADF) swooped down on Sebokeng, Sharpeville and Boipatong, the large black townships ringing Johannesburg. After police had searched a house, they placed bright orange stickers on the premises that said "Cooperation for peace and security" and "Trust me, I am your friend." They would then dip the occupants' fingers in red ink "so that they would be free to move about."

Three hundred seventy-three people were arrested in the raids, code-named Operation Palmiet (Bullrush). The SAP said the searches were aimed mainly at "revolutionaries," but none were found. Those arrested were held for violating pass laws, or for possession of marijuana, firearms, pornographic material and stolen goods.

This dramatic show of force by the state comes during a year marked by the apartheid regime's attempts to market its highly touted "reforms" to Western governments as an indication that South Africa is moving toward democracy. These reforms are embodied in the new constitution whites approved by a 66 percent majority in November 1983 and in the elections for the new tri-cameral parliament that were held in August.

The reality of this so-called "new deal" is that blacks are being stripped of power at a local level. And on the national level, the government is attempting to divide Indian and colored South Africans from their black compatriots by offering the former groups new constitutional privileges.

This year there has been a dramatic increase in the level of black resistance to these initiatives. Opposition has taken shape on several levels. First, there is a new organizational opposition. Students are leading massive school boycotts, black mineworkers have struck legally for the first time in South African history, and a broad coalition of groups led by the United Democratic Front (UDF) successfully organized a nationwide boycott of the tri-cameral parliament elections. And most importantly, the successful 2-day job stay-away on November 5 and 6 represented the first time that the new black trade unions, working together with community and student groups, took major action on broad political issues.

The widespread urban unrest represents a different dimension of the struggle against the new "reforms." While there are numerous incidents of random and brutal violence in the townships, there is now a strong central component of organized political opposition within the black communities. Their ability to sustain their campaign against the new apartheid legislation has pushed the state to a panic response, as Pretoria attempts to regain the tactical and propagandistic advantage. Thus the SAP's crude attempt in their leaflets and stickers to win the hearts and minds of the township residents in the Palmiet raids.

Many observers here have been quick to draw comparisons to the Soweto uprisings of 1976. "But the present situation is different," said the Rev. Frank Chikane, a member of the UDF's national executive. "(Protest) can't be mopped up, like in 1976, because you are dealing with people with a political consciousness now."

The major causes of the 1984 unrest have been the opposition in the townships to two new disguises of apartheid policy: black local government and the new constitution.



IN THE WORLD

C. NUNN/AFRPIX

## SOUTH AFRICA

# For blacks, "new deal" means the same old apartheid

The Black Local Authorities (BLA) Act of 1982 directed that residents of an urban black township could vote for members of a local town or city council. This council is charged with providing and maintaining basic services such as water and electricity, road building and trash removal. They have also been given control of the police force and responsibility for enforcing pass laws.

But the councils have not been given any money with which to operate, so they must function solely on income received from sales of alcohol, fines, property levies and utility service charges. House rents are paid to a different government agency.

In practice, 70 percent of the income of the administration boards (the forerunner of the town councils) was derived from the sales of alcohol in 1980-81. The town councils are further starved for money as a result of a law passed in the early '70s that declared a township such as Soweto, lying outside of Johannesburg, was thereafter "autonomous." This was a euphemism for saying that it was financially cut off from a wealthy white urban center and would receive none of the taxes paid by the large corporations and wealthy residents of the cities.

The new black town councils are politically impotent, ultimately being under the

control of the Minister of Cooperation and Development (formerly the Minister of Bantu Affairs). This branch of government administers most of the apartheid laws that affect black people, from bantu education to forced removals. The government claimed, however, that the act would provide Africans with a bigger say in the running of their townships. But the government's real intention was captured in a newspaper editorial that stated: "the rule is simple: Africans must pay for their own houses and services. If they can't afford it, they must go and live in the homelands."

Elections for the new town councils were held in November and December 1982. Community leaders, led by the UDF, called for a boycott of the elections. They claimed that the new councillors would be government puppets.

The election results surprised even supporters of the plan in Pretoria. Black turnout for the BLA elections was less than 21 percent nationwide. The UDF charged that the numbers were inflated and that actual turnout was less than 10 percent. One example of black sentiment toward the election was demonstrated in the township of Evaton. Of the 33,000 adults living there, only 535 people voted in the council elections. Black township residents let it be known that they

would not be duped so easily by the facade of reform.

As always, the promise of big paychecks, houses and political power provided the policy's architects with the black councillors they needed to do Pretoria's work (and the Minister of Cooperation and Development was authorized to appoint councillors in case none were elected).

The social and economic position of the new councillors fits in with Prime Minister Botha's plan to develop a pool of black, middle-class bureaucrats who can both represent Pretoria's interests and stand as a buffer between the government and the masses of poor, discontent blacks. But more important, it is these black puppet leaders, such as the heads of the bantustans, whom Pretoria points to as the "true leaders" of the black people. It is with these leaders that Pretoria will negotiate the future of South Africa's 23 million blacks.

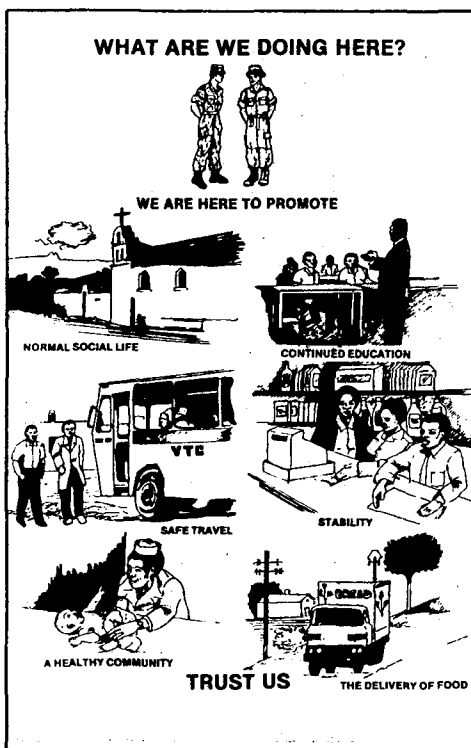
As Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning Chris Heunis put it this way, "By leaders, I don't imply that we have only to consult with the leaders of the national independent states, but also with identified urban leaders, especially those who seek solutions on a constitutional and peaceful basis... We will not talk to people that opt for revolutionary or forcible changes in this country." Both Pretoria and Washington can point to "negotiations" and "open discussions" that are taking place with South Africa's black "leaders," thus preserving the facade of progress while further entrenching the reality of apartheid.

In the past 10 months, township residents have been proven correct in their predictions about the new councils. The new councillors have quickly set about raising property rents and levying surcharges in desperate attempt to keep themselves and their townships solvent.

In the Transvaal township of Daveyton, rents were raised by 200 percent. The Soweto City Council increased water tariffs by \$2.15, and levied an electricity surcharge of \$12 per household — even for households that had no electricity.

Then in October of this year, the Soweto city council voted to provide a plot of land for Soweto "mayor" Ephraim Tshabalala that would accommodate his plans for a two-story house, tennis courts, meeting rooms and swimming pool. Despite the fact that the wait for housing in the overcrowded

*Continued on following page*



## The major causes of the new unrest have been the opposition in the townships to new disguises of apartheid: black local government and the new constitution.



Continued from preceding page.

township is often longer than five years, the Council approved a residential plot that is big enough to hold 50 houses.

The people have responded angrily to this new form of government control. On September 3 residents of the townships of the so-called Vaal Triangle, an area about 30 miles south of Johannesburg, stayed away from work to protest increased rents. Throughout the day shops were looted, and the homes of the new town councillors were petrol-bombed.

At one point, people marching peacefully by one of the town councillor's houses were greeted by gunshots, as the councillor began firing at them. Riots broke out, and after two days 70 people lay dead, including four town councillors. Several other councillors heeded residents' demands and resigned their positions. In Soweto two weeks later, five people were killed by police in a similar "stay-away." And in two separate incidents that occurred on October 28, the mayors of two different black townships in the Eastern Transvaal had their houses attacked and burned down by angry mobs of residents. Since late October, the town councils of Tembisa and Ratenda, two major townships, have resigned *en masse*. Alistair Sparks of the *Rand Daily Mail* estimates that since the stay-away of November 5 and 6, township unrest "has virtually wiped out the system of black local authorities," with only four of the 22 councils in the Transvaal province still functioning.

The South African government is reluc-

tant to admit that the violence in the townships has a decidedly political overtone, preferring to blame it on "outside agitators." Much of the violence is directed specifically at the institutional symbols of apartheid — namely government-backed "puppet" leaders, their businesses, and government buildings.

Even the *Financial Mail*, an influential South African business magazine, has written, "Black councils established under the BLA Act seem doomed. Members are quitting their posts in response to calls by activist groups."

As an alternative to the town councils, the major townships have elected their own civic associations, which have actively organized residents to fight the rent increases and the policies of the town councils. This struggle for democratic control of the communities has been at the heart of the present unrest.

#### New assault.

The new constitution represents a different kind of assault on the black majority. The constitution went hand in hand with the propaganda stunt intended by the BLA act. In a pamphlet entitled "Guidelines for a New Dispensation," the government's Department of Constitutional Planning and Development posed the question, "Why are blacks not included in the new dispensation?" The answer given was: "Blacks already have their own governments and administrations as, for example, in KwaZulu (where Zulu ministers attend to their own affairs), or in Soweto, where new councils

with extended powers are to be established."

The new constitution provides for a tri-cameral parliament, with representation for colored and Indian people. The parliament now consists of a white House of Assembly (178 members), a colored House of Representatives (85 members) and an Indian House of Delegates (45 members).

Blacks had already been given a taste of the kind of reform promised by the new constitution. "The Black Local Authorities, Indian and colored parliaments are doomed to failure," predicted a member of the popularly based Soweto Civic Association. "They are unacceptable and don't have the support of the people. I am convinced that our experience with the new councils is the indicator of things to come under the new parliament. The same lies, the same promises, and eventually worse hardships for us." A multi-racial coalition led by the UDF organized a nationwide boycott of what they called the "sham elections." The elections, held in August, were boycotted by over 80 percent of the eligible Indian and colored voters.

The timing of the new parliamentary elections in late August and the beginnings of the major riots in the black townships in early September is no coincidence. It represents both a coalescence of opposition and an agonizing climax of black frustration and anger.

Both the black local authorities and the new constitution must be understood in the context of the larger apartheid strategy. The BLAs evolved as part of Botha's dream of

a social, economic and political "constellation of South African states." Within this scheme, rural blacks would be left to manage their own affairs in the form of independent homelands. Urban blacks would be represented by a national body based on the town councils. The bulk of South Africa would be preserved for the whites.

Together with the new constitution, the new reforms represent a refinement of South Africa's overarching divide-and-rule strategy. It is a strategy of wholesale cultural, social and economic destruction. Not only are Indians and coloreds set against blacks in the new constitutional dispensation, but blacks are played off against blacks on the local level in the BLAs. But non-whites have delivered a resounding blow to this plan. They have resisted imposed divisions and left Pretoria haphazard and defensive in its attempts to maintain the advantage.

#### The state responds.

The price paid for the struggle in the townships has been high. The South African Institute of Race Relations released statistics stating that 131 people had been killed in township unrest between February 15 and late October. This is a conservative estimate drawn from news reports.

And the death toll continues to climb daily. Minister of Law and Order Louis LeGrange admitted on November 15, that of the 131 people killed in township unrest since August 1, 96 died as a result of "police actions" and 195 people were wounded by the SAP. And at a time when Pretoria is boasting of new "free" elections, the number of people being imprisoned without trial this year has jumped to 1,006 by the end of October, according to the information released by the Detainees' Parents Support Committee on November 20. LeGrange excludes homeland detentions from government statistics, thereby reducing the total number by 50 percent. Among those still in detention are 18 leaders of the election boycott and 12 leaders of the November 5 and 6 "stay-away." It is part of what the South African Council of Churches has declared the worst state repression of this century in South Africa.

A significant feature of the October raids on the urban townships is that it is the first time since the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 that conscripted servicemen of the SADF have been used to quell urban unrest (even during the Soweto uprisings of 1976, the SADF was not officially deployed, although there were "reports of assistance given to the police at certain areas"). Since the Palmiet raids, the SADF has backed up the police on several occasions. And Minister LeGrange has promised that the SADF will be used again when needed. This represents a major escalation of the urban conflict and is also an indication of how threatened Pretoria feels by the continuing level of protest.

An editorial appearing in the *Cape Times* just after the Vaal raids argued, "Pretoria can theoretically ring EVERY urban township with steel, but the basic causes of bitterness among blacks, if not addressed, will grow. [While Mr. Heunis, Dr. Viljoen and their cabinet colleagues (Ministers of Constitutional Planning and Development, and of Cooperation and Development, respectively) fiddle around on the periphery of the problem, producing the odd bit of relief here and there, the basic causes of black unrest are left untouched.] They include influx control, inferior education and services and, most important, a new constitution which leaves blacks in limbo...Some black leaders have already branded (this) civil war."

Whether or not a civil war is under way in South Africa is a rhetorical question. The resistance and the state response make a mockery of the notion that reform is taking place in South Africa. What Pretoria has confirmed by its actions in the townships is the total failure of its "new deal" policies to appease the majority blacks' struggle for a democratic, non-racial society. The regime's heavy-handed reaction also legitimates the power of its new opposition, which has put the Botha government and its proxies on the defensive. And this opposition, by nearly all accounts, is only in the formative stage.

**Next time: The "new deal" meets the new resistance.**

**David Goodman writes regularly from South Africa.**

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## ITALY

# Latest scandal leads to Reagan administration



Francesco Pazienza is the key figure in the American connection to the Italian scandals.

By Diana Johnstone

**T**HE LATEST CASCADE OF SCANDALS involving Italian military counterintelligence seems to have ramifications reaching into the Reagan administration. As with Watergate, the scandals involve abuses by intelligence agencies, financial swindles and suggestions of gangsterism. Although the plots have yet to be fully unraveled, they seem to provide yet another illustration that perhaps the greatest danger to public security lies in secretive "security forces."

The key figure in the American connection to the Italian scandals is Francesco Pazienza, known to be a friend and associate of Michael Ledeen, who was resident expert in Italian affairs at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies before going to work for the Reagan administration. Ledeen is perhaps best known in the U.S. for his work with Claire Sterling on the subject of "international terrorism."

Pazienza has escaped arrest in Italy by establishing himself in the U.S., and the U.S. government has so far ignored Italian requests for extradition. Pazienza himself seems to be confident of top-level protection.

Investigations have shown that Pazienza, enriching himself as he went along, played an amazingly versatile role as go-between in obscure dealings between the Mafia, the P-2 Masonic lodge and the Italian military counterintelligence agency SISMI (Servizio Informazioni e Sicurezze Militari) between 1978 and 1982.

On October 24, the Italian news agency ANSA carried excerpts of a memo from Pazienza to investigating judges in which Pazienza claimed to have set up within SISMI a special organism called by its members "Super S," answerable only to SISMI's chief, General Giuseppe Santovito. General Santovito fell from office in August 1981 after his name showed up on Licio Gelli's list of secret P-2 members. He was arrested in December 1983 and died last February 5.

Santovito's deputy, General Pietro

Musumeci, and five collaborators were arrested on October 19 in an ongoing investigation of misdeeds attributed to "Super S." Many people in Italy believe that the explanation for the existence of "Super S" can be found in a secret clause of the peace treaty between Italy and the U.S. providing for American use of Italian intelligence operations, notably for anti-Communist purposes. This is an hypothesis that Pazienza's statements tend to corroborate. Pazienza may indeed have a personal interest in stressing the political, rather than the money making, side of his activities.

According to Pazienza's memo, "Super S" was a plumbers' outfit that helped track leaks to Communist and left journalists. He added that it also concerned itself with operations involving the Pope and PLO leader Yasir Arafat, the Cirillo case and the Mafia. He said it was dismantled at the wish of General Nino Lugaresi, "chosen head of SISMI by the Italian Republicans with support from the Italian Communist Party."

While it lasted, "Super S" was involved in some strange business indeed:

• **BILLYGATE** — Francesco Pazienza and Michael Ledeen seem to have set up President Jimmy Carter's foolish brother Billy for the scandal known as "Billygate," in order to break it during the 1980 election campaign. Many Italians express surprise that there has not been an uproar in the U.S. about this very dirty trick — dirtier, even (if perhaps less effective), than the much better known dirty trick of the 1980 Reagan campaign; stealing Carter's debate notes.

*La Repubblica* reported on October 23 that Judge Domenico Sica seemed to have "proof that SISMI was the architect of the scandal over Billy Carter... The scandal was publicized in the U.S. on the eve of the 1980 presidential elections on the basis of work carried out by Francesco Pazienza and other SISMI functionaries. Carter's brother was accused of making an oil deal with Libya and of receiving a \$50,000 kickback from Kadhafi." There were also descriptions of the bumpkin brother living it up with glamorous women at the Rome Hilton Hotel.

"This scandalous material was gathered mostly by Pazienza and by his American

friend Michael Ledeen," *La Repubblica* said. "Pazienza availed himself of SISMI both for the use of some secret agents and for the expenses of organizing the scandalous plan. It seems that the organizers got a huge payoff for 'Billygate.' Moreover, Santovito and Pazienza got great advantages in return from American officials, in fact may have been helped in other obscure affairs. The 'Billygate' operation did not come under SISMI's institutionally mandated tasks, and for that reason Judge Sica brought charges of pursuing private interest through official activities."

For two years, investigation into the P-2 Masonic lodge scandals have come up with indications that Pazienza and Ledeen were closely associated and both worked at times for SISMI. But although Ledeen was a Reagan administration official, somewhat known for his propagation (along with Claire Sterling and Arnaud de Borchgrave) of "international terrorism" theories, this story has never been played up in the U.S.

• **THE BOLOGNA MASSACRE** — On August 2, 1980, a powerful explosion devastated the busy railroad station in the northern Italian city of Bologna, known for its popular Communist government. Eighty-five people were killed and 200 wounded in the worst terrorist crime in recent European history.

SISMI was supposed to help solve the crime. Instead, it sent police and judicial investigators off on tracks leading nowhere.

On January 13, 1981, police received a tip that explosives like those that blew up the Bologna station were on the train from Taranto en route to Milan. The explosives were found, and the next day a message was received from a fascist group threatening to blow up the Milan station.

Now Judge Sica accuses Pietro Musumeci and his colleague, Lieut. Colonel Giuseppe Belmonte, of having planted the explosives themselves. Their motive? Judge Sica suggested they wanted to get credit for preventing a massacre. Spokesmen for the Bologna massacre victims' association, however, accuse them of deliberately leading investigators astray in order to cover up for the real killers.

The second hypothesis is supported by the fact that in February 1981, Musumeci sent investigators a detailed report maintaining that the Bologna massacre was the work of the German neo-Nazi Hoffman group, linked to the Munich Oktoberfest bombing. But Musumeci's leads all proved dead ends.

• **THE CIRILLO CASE** — Colonel Belmonte of SISMI shows up again in the case of the large ransom paid for the release of Ciriaco De Mita, a Christian Democratic Party stalwart and local urban planning official in the Naples suburb of Torre del Greco. This mediocre figure was kidnapped by the Red Brigades on April 27, 1981, and was freed three months later in return for 1.5 billion lire (more than \$1 million) to the Red Brigades.

This seemed scandalous, coming three years after the Christian Democrats refused to negotiate with the Red Brigades for the release of their national chairman, Aldo Moro. Moreover, it came out eventually that the entire ransom was twice that sum, with half paid to the Red Brigade leftist terrorists, and the other half going to the local gangster organization, the camorra, that had served as intermediary in the deal. Colonel Belmonte and other agents, whose names were scratched from the prison register, visited camorra boss Raffaele Cutolo in his cell in Ascoli Piceno prison to further the negotiation culminating in the shakedown which profited both the Red Brigades and the gangsters.

Francesco Pazienza's name cropped up again as an intermediary between the Christian Democrats, the secret services and the camorra.

The Cirillo case was significant in showing cooperation between Red Brigades terrorism and organized crime and the secret services' readiness to deal with both.

• **MORO CASE** — In efforts to rescue Aldo Moro from his Red Brigade captors in the spring of 1978, SISMI displayed an incompetence that has aroused suspicions of complicity. General Musumeci interpreted the clear tip to Moro's whereabouts

"Gradoli," as the village of Gradoli in Viterbo province and dispatched police there, in vain. Moro was actually being held right in Rome, in the Via Gradoli, as was discovered too late. Colonel Musumeci led another wild goose chase to a frozen mountain lake on a false tip that, when published, was interpreted by the Red Brigades as a signal from authorities that Moro's death was accepted.

SISMI was the latest name for a military counterintelligence service that had changed from its previous names, SIFAR and SID, in the wake of somewhat similar if less extensive scandals. Former SID agent Roberto Cavallaro told the weekly *Europeo* (November 3) that: "The security services make special alliances both with organized crime and with terrorism... The secret services exercised a strict control over the terrorist groups", both left and right. Given the choice by SID, Cavallaro himself infiltrated right-wing terrorists, by affinity.

• **THE CALVI CASE** — Roberto Calvi, the president of the failed Banco Ambrosiano that handled much Vatican money, was found hanging dead from Blackfriars Bridge in London on June 18, 1982. The summer before, Calvi, in deep trouble, had put himself in the care of Pazienza. Pazienza's memo quoted by ANSA on October 25 said Calvi had asked him to put "Super S", which was being expelled from SISMI by General Cugaresi, in the service of the Banco Ambrosiano to investigate the recycling of dirty money. In Sardinia in the summer of 1981, Pazienza helped arrange a refuge for Calvi with the help of local Mafia bosses, notably Domenico Balducci, who frequently went along with Pazienza on the SISMI airline CAI which he used for some 130 illegal flights. Balducci was murdered in October 1981. Anyway, it was also Pazienza who introduced Calvi to Flavio Carboni, the last man known to have seen the fugitive banker alive. Alvaro Giardili, an associate who reportedly helped Pazienza extort more than \$1 million from the Saudi Arabian international arms dealer Sheikh Kashoggi has testified that a girl friend of Pazienza told him in October 1983 that Pazienza was "loaded with money because he had sold the old man" — meaning Calvi.

• **LICIO GELLI'S "P2" MASONIC LODGE** — Parliamentary investigators have identified all the leaders of SISMI's "Super S" as members of Gelli's conspiratorial P2: General Santovito, General Musumeci and Francesco Pazienza. When Licio Gelli escaped from prison in Geneva one night in August 1983 and was transported by hired helicopter to Monaco, Francesco Pazienza's luxury yacht was waiting in the harbor.

Perhaps the greatest danger to public security lies in secretive "security forces."

• **THE BULGARIAN CONNECTION** — On Dec. 29, 1981, six months after he was sentenced to life imprisonment for shooting the Pope, the Turkish assassin Ali Agca received a long visit in his Ascoli Piceno prison cell from a Major Petrucelli of SISMI and a Dr. Bonagura of the civilian counterintelligence agency SISDE. On February 2, 1982, Agca told lawyer Pietropaolo that the "services" had promised him that if he talked he could get his sentence reduced to 10 years at most.

On that same day, investigating judge Ilario Martella paid his first visit to Agca and said he could promise nothing, but that the "penitents law" might have a clause concerning him, and indeed, it was then being revised to allow indulgence for convicted killers. In May, Agca started telling Martella about the Bulgarian connection, modeling his story as it went along. In Sep-

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By Robin Cody

*The Indian will be allowed to take fish... at the usual fishing places and this promise will be kept by the Americans as long as the sun shines, as long as the mountains stand, and as long as the rivers run.*

—Governor Isaac Stevens,  
Walla Walla Treaty Grounds, 1855

ONE OF THE GREAT REAL ESTATE deals of American history was consummated in 1855, when Isaac Stevens—the first governor of the Washington Territory and superintendent of U.S. Indian Affairs—took title to millions of acres of prime forest and potential farmland in what are now the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. In return, he offered his assurances that the native Indian people would be allowed to hunt, to gather roots and berries and to harvest the salmon runs at all their usual places in the vast Columbia River drainage system.

What separates this deal from other great ones—Manhattan for the beads and trinkets, the Louisiana Purchase for three cents an acre, Alaska for \$7.2 million—is the manner of retribution. The Manhattan Indians did, after all, get their beads and trinkets, and the French and the Russians solved their short term cash-flow problems. In the Pacific Northwest, on the other hand, retribution was based upon a promise in perpetuity: a solemn pledge or a pile of dusty, old-fashioned words, depending on who does the interpreting.

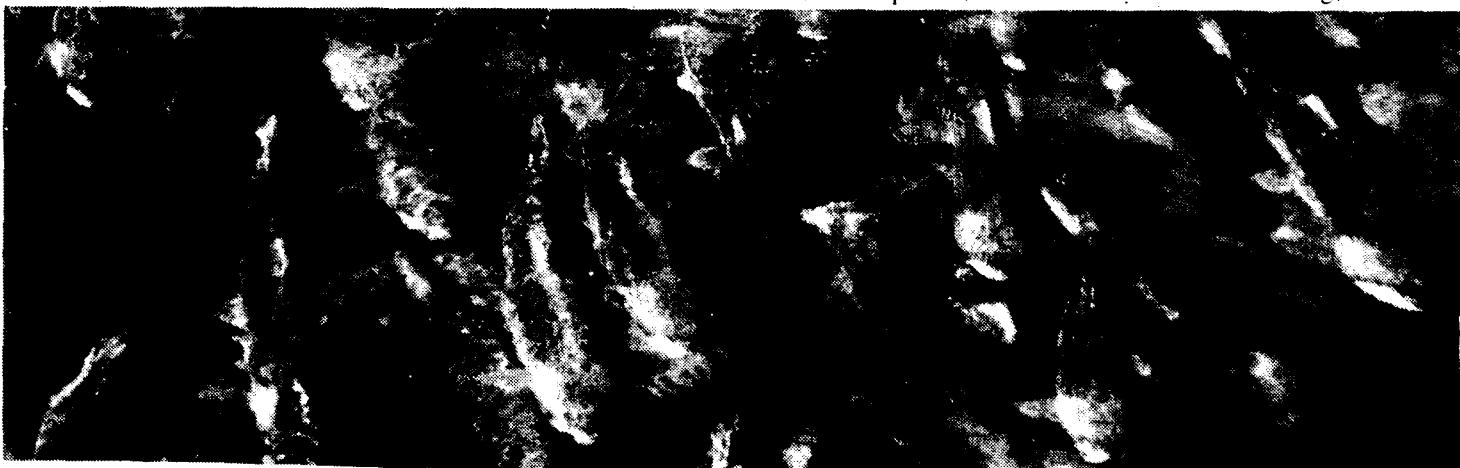
Now, 130 years into perpetuity, the battle over who gets the fish, and in what proportion, has developed into a legal and cultural conflict that pits commercial interests against the Indian fishermen.

Not even Stevens—by all accounts a visionary champion of the notion of Manifest Destiny—could have anticipated the effects of industrial and commercial development, dams, pesticides, irrigation farming, clear-cut logging and off-shore commercial harvests on what was then considered an inexhaustible supply of Columbia River salmon. The land appeared to be paradise. It must have seemed inconceivable that someday there might not be enough fish to go around.

The Indians that Lewis and Clark encountered along the Columbia River were small, independent bands—more like families than tribes—of gentle people in an abundant land. They had no evident need to organize themselves, as the Plains Indians had, into larger “nations” for subsistence and protection.

Salmon were these Indians’ subsistence, their religion, their currency, their source of wonder and faith in the recurring abundance of nature. Then, as now, the life cycle of the salmon was incorporated into the river Indians’ ceremonies marking birth, death, creation of the earth and the taking of names.

Not many Columbia River Indians remain. Maybe 150 or so, counting kids and old folks, actually live on the river and sur-



vive off the fish. In the early years of the American Northwest, many of these mild people succumbed to invader-carried disease or alcohol or violence. Those who survived have either integrated—not particularly successfully, as a group—into the mix of American culture or have been herded onto reservations. None of the reservations is within 50 miles of the Columbia, so the river-based means of livelihood for these people has been effectively destroyed.

Today the reservations of the four main Indian groups—Warm Springs, Yakima, Umatilla and Nez Perce—are refuges where

the dispirited make do with government compensation checks. Mineral and timber rights continue to provide support for those who live on the reservations and conduct themselves like “good Indians.” But to the few who continue to live independently, on the Columbia River, what really matters is their right to fish.

These, in the eye of the law, are the “bad Indians”—renegades, poachers, trespassers. They regard the U.S. as a hostile nation and consider the representatives of state fish and game departments as agents of an occupying force.

David SoHappy is one of these “renegades.” Now 52 and wrinkled by time and the river, he lives year round at Cooks Landing, Wash., which is a rocky, wind-whipped promontory on the Columbia River. Determined to live, as he puts it,

“in the old ways,” SoHappy has been a fisherman since age five, like his father before him. Although he doesn’t get rich at fishing, he claims to support 19 dependents and is proud of the fact that his clan has never been on welfare.

About fishing out of season, he says: “This is my river, always has been. If I don’t fish, I’d be giving up my treaty rights.”

To Wayne Lewis, chief law enforcement officer of the Northwest region of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the issue is just as simple. “These people are crimi-

nals,” says Lewis. “They’re breaking the law. That’s all there is to it.”

The conflict between law enforcement officers and Indian fishermen is nothing new in the Northwest. As treaty rights, over the years, were reconsidered, reinterpreted and chipped away, the Indian was left with nothing much resembling the original “promise in perpetuity.” A landmark decision in U.S. courts in 1974 protected the Indians’ access to half the in-river salmon runs. This decision—known on the Columbia as the Boldt decision—was regarded by non-Indians as a victory for the Indian people.

But the once-great salmon runs of the Columbia are disappearing. Today the Indian fishermen have good reason to think of the Boldt decision as a huge trick perpetuated by U.S. Commerce at the expense of the natives. Half of nothing, if it comes

to that, is still nothing.

Nobody familiar with the Columbia River fishery would claim that Indians are the cause of declining salmon runs. Indians have been catching and trading fish since the first hungry white caravan arrived from the East to begin recording time for them. Built into their ancient religion and mythology are the supposedly modern conservationist notions of restraint in harvest and celebration of the species’ fittest, who evade the nets and proceed on to spawning, death and regeneration. The salmon is friend and teacher, not just a commodity.

But now that the salmon runs have been decimated by the effects of dams, industrialization and huge off-shore commercial harvests of fish, the U.S. government, aligned with these same commercial interests, needs someone to blame. And who better to blame than these renegade Indians who are out there breaking the law by taking some fish?

In the summer of 1982, undercover agents of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of the U.S. Department of Commerce culminated a 14-month investigation—using wire taps, body microphones, aerial reconnaissance photography and river patrols—of illegal fish sales on the Columbia. Although Commerce’s NMFS has law enforcement responsibilities throughout the Columbia River drainage system and out to 200 miles off shore, it chose to zero in on the 147-mile stretch of upper Columbia River between Bonneville and McNary Dams, where only Indians fish. And they caught only Indians.

NMFS agents had infiltrated the Indian river communities to gain the confidence and—the subsequent trial tapes show—to sharpen the commercial instincts of Indian fishermen. Free-spending front men for a bogus corporation set up fish-buying stations at the Indian village of Celilo and at a remote farmhouse in the hills behind Cooks Landing. Undercover agents timed their arrival to coincide with the Indians’ perfectly legal ceremonial and subsistence fishing season, to be assured that many fish would be changing hands.

A government task force that included boats, planes and 13 motor vehicles raided SoHappy’s tiny collection of low shacks and fish-drying sheds at Cooks Landing on June 17, 1982. According to SoHappy and others present, the fish narcs stuck a gun in SoHappy’s face, sacked his dwellings and confiscated fishing gear, boats, papers and books. The agents found the illegal fish they were looking for and served their warrants, as they would later do at several other Indian fishing spots on the upper Columbia.

SoHappy was arrested and found guilty,

# CULTURE CLASH ON T



National Geographic



# THE COLUMBIA RIVER



On the Columbia, Howard Jim (far left), Jack Schwartz (in suit), Jim Palmer (behind Schwartz) and Warner Jim and family (far right)

in federal court in Los Angeles. He is now out of jail, pending appeal of a five-year sentence. "Poaching, they got me for," says the leathery, weather-whipped but still-defiant SoHappy, in disgust. "For it to be poaching, the fish have to belong to somebody else. If the King and Queen of England own the land and a man comes in and kills an animal, that's poaching. That's where the word comes from."

SoHappy says as far as he is concerned, there is no law that can keep him off the river. "I have a right to fish in all the usual places, just like it says in the treaty."

That right is currently being challenged as never before.

The big bust of 1982 was carried out by Oregon and Washington State Police, Fish and Game Commissions, and local law enforcement officers, coordinated by NMFS regional headquarters in Seattle. The sting operation got extended, and approving coverage in the Northwest press. Seventy-five Indians were arrested during SAMSCAM, as it was called. Commerce spokesmen gushed that they could document 53 tons—\$150,000 worth—of illegally sold fish over the 14-month period of their undercover operation.

Now 53 tons is a goodly pile of fish, if it were to appear on your front lawn one morning. But spread over 14 months—including two spring salmon runs—and then divided among the 75 Indians arrested, the piles become imaginable. \$150,000, for 75 people, works out to \$2,000 apiece over two high fishing seasons. Compared to offshore commercial harvests of salmon, which often sweep up thousands of tons per day, the documented Indian take becomes miniscule.

Yet the government's sting operation was successful in bringing two headline-sized facts before the reading public: "Salmon runs disappearing," and "Big-time Indian poachers caught." The implication was that those two facts were causally related.

Non-Indian commercial fishermen, sports fishermen and the general public were whipped into a frenzy of resentment

against the Indians. The trouble with the government's case, however, is that if the accused do not plead guilty, they get their day in court. And what a bucket of bait that has turned out to be for the Commerce Department.

In the government's zeal to catch the criminals (and it did nab some serious cheaters), federal agents cast their net wide and brought in women, children and entire families. The government wound up prosecuting Indian people who never should have been brought to trial. The handful of convictions have come very slowly, even though the Indians' treaty defense is almost always dismissed in state and U.S. courts as being irrelevant. Indian communities have been unnecessarily humiliated and harassed, in the process, while the cost to taxpayers is enormous.

Howard Jim is another of the Indian "criminals" caught in the SAMSCAM net. This past February, Jim was tried on charges of having sold four spring chinook to undercover agents of the NMFS. Jim was found innocent, by an 11-to-1 verdict of an all-Caucasian jury in Wasco County, Ore. But even though he was found innocent, the effect of his arrest and trial on the Indian community was devastating.

Jim, age 65, is the last of the Columbia River Chiefs. He lives at Celilo, where the Columbia River—before the Dalles Dam was built in 1957—used to narrow and cascade over great whitewater slabs, and the Indians fished with their pole-handled hoop nets from rickety water-slick scaffolds built out over the water. These days Celilo Falls, that most famous of "usual fishing spots," lies under 40 feet of dead water behind the dam.

Successor to the great Chief Tommy Thompson at Celilo, Jim is the man chosen by his people to make the laws and to preside over the religious ceremonies in his own culture. The spectacle of Howard Jim this February in the Wasco County courthouse, in his long dark braids, holding an eagle feather in his right hand, and trying to make sense of legal jargon, was an excruciating

humiliation to his people. Jim neither reads nor writes in English, though he does speak the language fairly well. Never has he lived on a reservation or been on welfare, and he is too proud to accept Social Security payments from what he, like David SoHappy, considers a foreign government.

Right after his arrest, nearly two years before his trial, Jim lost his job peeling posts in Umatilla County because a court clerk told him he could not leave Wasco County. The Indian patriarch then endured two years of unemployed waiting, and three days of trial and public humiliation—all for an alleged four fish which, it turns out, he never intended for commercial sale at all. The fish—Jim claimed, and the jury believed—were to be used in the Longhouse funeral of Jim's mother.

Jim's arrest and trial was simply another

## Declining salmon run pits fishing rights of River Indians against commercial interests and their government enforcers.

setback in what has been a historical progression for him. When he was growing up, the U.S. appropriated the family's ranch near Roosevelt, on the Washington side of the river, because the Navy needed a bombing range during World War II. He moved to Celilo with his wife's relatives in 1957, just as the new reservoir behind The Dalles Dam covered up the great falls. Then a new interstate highway cut directly through the historic village, forcing removal of dwellings across the highway from the new flat river.

The river Indians' range of response over the years has run from cheerful concession

to dismayed resignation. If Jim and his people were warriors, this historical progression might properly be called tragic. But gentle and accepting as they are, it more closely resembles pathos.

SAMSCAM trials continue. The most recent threat against the river Indians, however, is an attempt by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to evict the few Indians remaining on the River who have erected dwellings at any of the five "In-Lieu Sites" above Bonneville Dam.

"In-Lieu Sites," such as Cooks Landing, where David SoHappy and his family live, are nothing more than Army Corps of Engineer-sculpted access points—landings, boat docks, where Indian people can reach the river. BIA spokesman Stan Speaks says these sites were never intended to have permanent residences or structures on them. The Indians living there claim the sites were built in lieu of their former places of fishing and residence, submerged since 1938 behind Bonneville dam.

SoHappy says the government promised 38 such sites but built only five. His understanding was that the U.S. was supposed to construct residences there, and never did, for displaced Indians.

SoHappy and other Indian fishermen have announced their intention to stick it out, to defy the government eviction notices. The specter of a dangerous confrontation on the river this winter looks more and more real with each passing month. To Jack Schwartz, the Portland lawyer who has dedicated his young career and sacrificed a lawyerly income toward defense of David SoHappy, Howard Jim and the other SAMSCAM victims, the eviction notices fit a pattern.

"Ethnocide," Schwartz says. "I doubt if even the white river cops say to themselves: 'Let's get rid of this ancient culture.' But each cog in the criminal justice machine, through ignorance, bias, laziness and a lack of guts, has combined to achieve an ethnocidal result."

Schwartz, 32 and Brooklyn-born, is a feisty, rapier-sharp veteran of the civil strife of the late '60s. He was in on the Yippie occupation of the New York State Capitol at Albany and later worked with William Kunstler during the Sioux Indian uprisings and trials at Wounded Knee.

"This is one of the last indigenous American communities in the lower 48," Schwartz continues. "These people live free of corporate paychecks and government jobs. Women, men and children are being dragged from court to court, where they face years in prison for living by federal treaty law."

Schwartz is livid. Why can't people see the historical context? The fate of the Indians reminds him of what his family went through. As Jews in Russia and Europe, their religious practices were limited, their economic rights were abolished and finally their culture was destroyed.

"If the government can just eliminate the last of these indigenous river people," Schwartz says, "there won't be any more questions about those treaties."

Over the years, the rush of American civilization has all but buried the original treaty language. Not that the words are too old to apply. The Golden Rule and the Bill of Rights are older, of course; the Gettysburg Address roughly contemporary.

But Isaac Stevens' pledge turned out to be inconvenient. It was inconvenient, especially, for the U.S. Commerce Department as it moved into the age of cheap hydroelectric power and great ocean-going canneries. Now the government—conveniently forgetting how the salmon runs came to be depleted in the first place—continues to prosecute and harass those few Indians left who catch, trade and worship the salmon, their ancient migratory friend and teacher.

Both—the Columbia River Indians and the salmon—are threatened to go the way of the Great Plains buffalo.

**Robin Cody** is a freelance writer based in Portland, Oregon.

Tax-exempt donations are welcomed by the Columbia River Indian Defense Project, P.O. Box 14044, Portland, OR 97214.



## EDITORIAL

# World Court gives pluralism within Nicaragua a big boost

Last week the World Court, which is the judicial arm of the United Nations, agreed to hear Nicaragua's claim that the United States is an aggressor country. The Court decided that it had jurisdiction in the matter by a vote of 15 to 1 — with only the American member of the Court dissenting. He then joined the majority in a unanimous vote against the U.S. contention that the Court should not hear the case even if it had jurisdiction.

The Court also extended its restraining order of last May that called on the United States to halt any attempts to blockade or mine Nicaraguan ports and to refrain from jeopardizing Nicaragua's political independence by any military or paramilitary activities.

The Court's decision struck a blow against Reagan administration policy and can only accelerate its difficulties in justifying its policy of attempting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua by force and violence. With typical hypocrisy, chief White House spokesman Larry Speakes complained that the Court's ruling "will be harmful to the Contadora negotiations and will, accordingly, hinder rather than help achieve peace in Central America."

Yet only one week earlier, Mexico's foreign minister had criticized the administration for itself attempting to frustrate the Contadora group's peace efforts. The Contadora nations — Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama — were particularly upset by a National Security Council document boasting about having "effectively blocked" the signing of the peace treaty they had drafted and Nicaragua had accepted.

But truth has never been a strong point

of the Reagan administration, and its disingenuousness is nowhere clearer than in its crocodile tears about the Sandinistas betraying their revolution and its justification of intervention on the basis of the claim that Nicaragua is a major source of arms for the rebels in El Salvador and a threat to the security of all its neighbors. Now that these excuses for intervention must be used as a defense before the World Court, even administration officials admit there's not much to them. As the *New York Times* reported, administration officials now say that they will have "much more difficulty making a convincing argument on the merits of the case itself than on the jurisdictional issue," because their assertion that Nicaragua is sponsoring guerilla attacks on El Salvador "would be difficult to prove in court."

Of course, the administration is actually trying to overthrow the Sandinista regime because it has chosen to assert genuine independence from U.S.-based corporate and financial interests, not because it threatens its neighbors. Indeed, it is not Nicaragua that threatens its neighbors, but just the opposite. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported November 23, it is the *contras* — the formerly CIA-supplied Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries — who are being supplied by Nicaragua's neighbors. As the *Times* put it, "The rebel army fighting Nicaragua's leftist government, its CIA funds cut off by Congress, is surviving through covert aid from the armed forces of El Salvador and Honduras and private donations from sympathizers in the United States." Two officers of the *contra* Nicaraguan Democratic Force told the *Times* that their main source of

supply since May has been "the armies of Honduras and El Salvador."

Unfortunately, the administration's ability to manipulate American public opinion — with the aid of the commercial media — is such that these facts, though occasionally reported, remain generally unknown. The same is true of the shabbiness of administration claims about Cuban and Soviet aid to the Sandinistas. The recent false alarm about Soviet MiG fighters being shipped



We do not believe that the Sandinistas have betrayed their own revolution, but even if they had, even if they attempted to be a carbon copy of Cuba, that would be their business, and it would be a giant step forward from the Somoza dictatorship — just as Castro's Cuba, with all its restrictions and dependency on the Soviet Union, is a giant step past Fulgencio Batista's Cuba.

It has been said, perhaps apocryphally, that when the Sandinistas took power they went to Fidel Castro and asked him what to do next. Castro replied that the only advice he could give was: avoid our mistakes. There is, of course, no way of knowing what Castro meant if he did say that, but there were two serious flaws in the Cuban revolution from a socialist point of view. First, Cuba became almost totally dependent on the Soviet Union for survival, and, therefore, beholden to it. Given the overt

*By an almost unanimous vote, the United Nations' judicial arm has agreed to hear Nicaragua's request that it declare the U.S. to be guilty of aggression.*

into Nicaragua is but the latest example. But just as there are no MiGs being shipped to Nicaragua, neither is there a heavy infusion of modern Soviet arms.

The State Department itself quietly recognized this in a June report entitled *Soviet Attitudes Towards, Aid to, and Contacts with Central American Revolutionaries*. "All too many claims proved open to question," the study declared. Soviet military equipment in Nicaragua is characterized as "unobtrusive" and "outdated," and "the limited amounts of truly modern equipment acquired by the Sandinistas...came from Western Europe, not the Eastern bloc." The report concluded that "the scope and nature of the Kremlin's infusion are far short of justifying the president's exaggerated alarms."

It is in the light of all this that administration officials told the *New York Times* that sooner or later they would face "a very tough decision" — either defy an order by the World Court and face international opprobrium as a lawless nation, or abandon its policy in Nicaragua. If the administration goes to Court, "We're going to lose on the merits," one mid-level administration official told the *Times*, "anybody who doubts that is nuts."

Meanwhile, under warlike conditions, the Sandinistas are trying to consolidate their revolution, stabilize their situation and get on with the process of establishing a new society. Under the best of circumstances this would be a difficult process, given a long history of colonial subservience to the United States and oppression under the Somoza dictatorship.

With no tradition of modern democracy, with a large majority of the population — the primary beneficiaries of the revolution — lacking any experience of participation in politics and with no examples of successful democratic socialist revolutions to follow, it would be absurd to expect the Sandinistas to live up to the laudable but mostly abstract democratic ideals of American leftist pundits. But despite that, many liberals and neoliberals have fallen — or jumped — into the Reagan administration trap of being more concerned about the success or purity of the revolution than about Nicaragua's right to determine and develop its own future in its own way.

hostility to the revolution on the part of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, Cuba had little choice in the matter — it was, after all, the first nation in the area to establish genuine independence from American capital. There was nowhere else to turn for survival of the revolution. Yet, of course, survival also meant serious compromises.

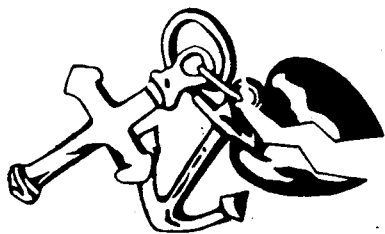
Second, and in part a result of the first, Cuba became a one-party state and even within that one party there has been no room for independent tendencies to develop publicly. Pluralism was deinstitutionalized. The issue is really not the lack of elections, which under any circumstances would have been, and still would be, won overwhelmingly by Castro and his supporters. But it is a free press, independent unions, etc.

Nicaragua has, so far, been able to avoid these two mistakes to a remarkable degree, given the unrelenting and insidious pressures put upon it by the Reagan administration. Cuba's existence and the revival of the Socialist International have made it possible for Nicaragua to survive without a compromising dependency on the Soviet Union. And those who stand for pluralism within the revolution have been able to win out among the Sandinistas, whether for principled or pragmatic reasons. One difference between Cuba and Nicaragua that helps guarantee the survival of pluralism is the much greater importance of the Church in Nicaragua — and its division between liberationists and traditionalists.

But Nicaragua has been forced into a state of war by Reagan, and in a state of war every country easily abandons democratic practices — one need only remember the United States in World War I to understand that. The real threat to revolutionary pluralism is now American pressure and American-sponsored subversion.

The World Court has dealt that subversion a heavy blow. If the United States does not withdraw from the Court it will have to reduce substantially its level of hostility toward Nicaragua, and the prospects for the flowering of pluralism within the revolution will be enhanced. Those who claim to have that as their goal should, therefore, direct their energies toward inducing the Reagan administration to submit to the World Court.

## Faith Hope no CHARITY



Judith Haiven's inside look at the ultra-conservative—and powerful—born-again movement. Haiven, a freelance investigative reporter, criss-crossed the continent to see first-hand the charismatic preachers who lead the movement, and how they operate. She interviews Jerry Falwell, Charles Colson, David Mainse, Ben Kinchlow, Ken Campbell, and hundreds of their followers. Her tour takes us to the giant Washington For Jesus rally in Washington, D.C.; the Christian Broadcasting Network in Lynchburg, Virginia; a taping of 100 Huntley Street; and Millwood's Christian School in Edmonton.

224 pages

\$7.95 paper

## Christians in the Nicaraguan Revolution

In this important book Margaret Randall, author of *Sandino's Daughters*, confronts the contradictions between Christian faith and politics. Her introduction explores "liberation theology" and its role in Nicaragua. The main part of the book is made up of interviews with Nicaraguan Christians who fused their religious faith with their belief in the need for social justice. We hear from ordinary Nicaraguans as well as from the country's political and religious leaders: Father Ernesto Cardenal, Father Fernando Cardenal, Father Uriel Molina, Sister Maria Hartman, Tomas Borge and others.

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—Joseph T. Krause  
Waverly, Iowa

## MULTI-RACIAL

YOUR REPORT (*ITT*, OCT. 3) ON MY SUCCESSFUL campaign for state representative from Boston gave an impression to some that the black and Latino communities were not a major factor in my victory.

Such is not the case. Organizations such as the Black Political Task Force, ACORN, Massachusetts Fair Share, the Latino Political Action Committee, and others played a vitally important role in helping to mobilize the Third World 40 percent of my district.

My campaign organization was strongly multi-racial at all levels. This was critical in our successes in the September 18 Democratic primary and in the general election.

The black and Latino communities in Boston, through organizations such as the BPTF, are becoming increasingly political and effective. My election as state representative for Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Roslindale is, in part, a reflection of that development and I wanted to set the record straight.

—John E. McDonough  
Representative-Elect  
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

## POPULAR SUPPORT IS THE BOTTOM LINE

STEPHEN J. DIAMOND'S ARTICLE ON Strade unions in Nicaragua (*ITT*, Nov. 21) was the most reasonable and responsible discussion of the issue I've seen so far. The survival of the Sandinista revolution almost certainly will be better for workers than would be its overthrow, and most of them seem to understand that. But Sandinista union officials sometimes weaken their own cause by hastily agreeing to ministerial proposals that may not make sense at the production site or for other reasons are unpopular.

I'm glad to see it noted that "Important battles for the future of the Nicaraguan revolution are being fought out within the Sandinista unions." They are important for seizing and strengthening the democratic potential within the mass organizations, and that is important for the survival of the revolution itself. No matter how many Soviet attack helicopters it gets, the Nicaraguan government's only significant strategic resource is the willingness of its people to fight and die for it.

—Geoffrey Fox  
New York

## TRUE POEM

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED YOUR NEWSPAPER and was pleased and delighted at the true poem written by Edgar Allen Poor (*ITT*, Oct. 31)—which I think is simply priceless. I made copies to send to some of my friends—both Republican and Democratic to read for the truth that is printed therein. It is magnificent—and I like all the other articles also.

I am a retired senior living on a small monthly Social Security check and can barely "make it" in this day and age. Wish I were rich—I would send you a sack of \$\$\$.

—Virginia Meder  
Sacramento, Calif.

## ONE MAN'S QUALITY...

LENNI BRENNER'S LETTER (*ITT*, NOV. 14) has finally sparked this short note. A few months ago, I was shocked to see an article by David Twersky in *ITT*, evidently signalling what we can expect to see from

now on: Zionist apologetics. Since this has now been followed up by Eric Lee's article, it seems a foregone conclusion that *ITT* has disposed of quality journalism on Israel/Palestine.

There seems to be a silent agenda on the issue of the Middle East and I think that it's about time that *ITT* explain very clearly its perspective on Zionism, and why *ITT* is moving rightward in its coverage of Israel/Palestine. David Mandel's articles, reflecting his involvement with the anti-Zionist movement, were incisive and well-thought out, and were never compromised by a need to follow a certain party line. I cannot say the same for the articles that have appeared since.

—David Millstein  
San Francisco, CA

## NO CHANCE

WHEN THE \$300 BILLION MILITARY spending bill was passed by the U.S. Senate just before the election, a little-noticed provision was sneaked into the bill that makes the federal government the sole defendant in all pending and future atomic test lawsuits.

Since 1945 there have been 633 announced nuclear tests and more than a million people have been exposed to radiation, including 250,000 military veterans. Many now suffering from the effects have filed lawsuits against private military contractors involved in these atomic tests.

This sneaky new law knocks the feet out from under veterans who filed suit against military contractors because it brings the Feres doctrine into play.

In *Feres vs. the U.S.* (1950) the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that veterans cannot sue the government for injury incident to military service.

By naming the government as the defendant in atomic test suits, the new law extends the reach of Feres to all pending and future veterans' suits against private contractors that will also include the victims of Agent Orange.

In Vietnam in 1967 we used a cleared area for a landing and pickup point for recon patrol. Agent Orange had turned the jungle area into a fine grey powder. And now many years later when I read about ex-Vietnam soldiers suffering from the effects of Agent Orange I wonder if an Agent Orange bug isn't eating away inside me. If there is, maybe I have no one to blame but myself since I went to Vietnam of my own choice, but for the many soldiers that were sent there and trusted their government and now face health problems, shouldn't they have a chance to be able to present their cases to a court of law?

—Al Hamburg  
Torrington, Wyo.

## BALEFUL

THE DEATHS OF HUMPHREY BOGART, Nat Cole, John Wayne and Steve McQueen may have occurred as a result of their voluntary patronage of the tobacco industry (my own father's death occurred in the same way), but Jay Kennedy's comparison of their experience to that of Holocaust victims (*ITT*, Letters, Nov. 7) strains the limits of reason. While advertising and false claims exercise an insidious effect, people choose the butt habit. The Holocaust, on the other hand, was not a voluntary program for torture, family dismemberment and self-immolation.

This baleful lack of logic is replicated in Kennedy's comparison between tobacco workers and agents of the death camps. The circumstances are different; the suffering is different; the motivations are different; the outcomes are different.

The Holocaust has been shamelessly used to buttress and illustrate the arguments of the anti-abortion forces. That it has now been appropriated to blast an admittedly irresponsible tobacco industry is equally ridiculous.

—Elanah Sherman  
Waterbury, Conn.

## RIGHTEOUS IS RIGHTEOUS

THE MAIN REASON WHY THE RIGHT HAS been running rings around the left in

# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

recent years is that while they use their brains (albeit cold-bloodedly), we go in for the eloquent striking of righteous poses.

One can fault the palates of cigarette smokers, for their inability to recognize the superiority of good cigars and pipe tobacco. But, whether they fail to shake an addiction, or place a higher priority on pleasure than on health, they buy the cigarettes themselves. And, in a society with a shortage of jobs, working people who make this product bought by individual consumers are not akin to the producers of the MX, for which I cannot avoid paying, and which I cannot keep from being used. (I'm willing to attribute to election-trauma one letter's likening of tobacco workers to the Nazi death-factory murderers.)

That leaves *ITT*'s willingness to run the ad. The Truman administration first proposed making health care a public service instead of a cash purchase more than a third of a century ago, and was defeated by an expensive and dishonest campaign by the physicians' professional organization. In the late '60s, the Johnson administration began to "throw money at" the problem of poor people's inability to purchase (we all know the prices!) prenatal and infant health care.

The dramatic decline in infant mortality that followed the Johnson program, is an indication of how much suffering and death have been caused poor people of all ages over the years, by the lobbying and cash of the AMA. On one side, cigarettes provided to people who want them; on the other, health services denied to people who need them.

That seems worse than what the tobacco workers do. Should *ITT* therefore refuse to run AMA ads recommending periodic check-ups? Maybe it should not permit physicians (one of whom wrote about its accepting the ad) to subscribe? Righteous is righteous.

"Controversy over smoking" in the ad is misleading, and should have caused an editorial negotiation.

—Stanley Sultan  
Boston, Mass.

## NO MISTAKE

IF I AM NOT MISTAKEN, *ITT* RECENTLY published one or two advertisements by the Tobacco Workers Unions, designed to evoke sympathy for its members and their need for the jobs they hold.

Such ads should not be run unquestioningly. They convey the idea that readers should ignore health hazards associated with smoking—a matter the ads carefully avoid mentioning. By ignoring the health hazards, you help the workers keep their jobs. This is an unacceptable position for readers to have to take.

By accepting and running the ads in their present form, *ITT* simply allows the union and its members to avoid dealing with the problems which they and society-at-large face.

Naturally, I am in sympathy with these workers. They should not bear any part of the costs of layoff and dislocation from falling demand for tobacco products. Nor should the many small farmers whose incomes depend on raising tobacco. The union's ads should indeed focus the reader's attention upon the distress faced by tobacco workers if the Surgeon General's warning proves effective (cigarette production has in fact gone up about 28 percent since the mid-'60s, when the warning was first placed on cigarette packs). The solution isn't more smoking, but alternative employments. The ads give no hint that the union has given thought to this!

I think that *ITT* is in position to compel the union to do so as a condition for running its ads, for where else would the union find sympathetic readers?

—Horst Brand  
Bethesda, Md.

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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STY1



## PERSPECTIVES

*Deficit catches up with Reagan*

Steve Kagan

By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

**T**HE YEARS OF 1917, 1927, 1939, 1950, 1984—this is the list of low-water marks for the American left, times of defeat, discouragement, and indecision. The first was the U.S. entry into World War I and the start of a furious witchhunt against those who had opposed involvement in Europe's imperialist bloodbath. The second was the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, the immigrant anarchists who, in their eloquence, "made the old words new before they died," as John Dos Passos put it.

The third was the Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact, which made a mockery of the anti-fascist Popular Fronts. The fourth was Sen. Joe McCarthy's famous speech in Wheeling, W.Va., in which he first claimed to have a list of 205 known Communists employed by the State Department, thus ushering in the great fear, the decade of betrayal and repression.

The fifth, of course, is Ronald Reagan's electoral triumph, which has done so much to underscore the left's weakness and lack of direction.

Those on the left who think of themselves as pragmatic realists attached themselves to a candidate who was moving rapidly to the right (indeed, on the issue of economic protectionism, had surpassed Reagan) and who went out of his way to scorn and insult everything the left holds dear. It was Walter Mondale, not Reagan, who talked about quarantining Nicaragua, described Che Guevara as "one of the most despicable men in history" and sneered at the president for suggesting that he might share Star Wars defense systems with the Soviets. Similarly, it was Mondale's running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, who didn't raise a peep, thereby signaling assent, when George Bush drew his obscene comparison between "totalitarian" Nicaragua and El Salvador "struggling toward democracy."

Reagan, for his part, held reasonably true throughout the campaign. The old codger does tend to ramble and lose his train of thought when discussing time capsules and long drives down the Cali-

fornia coast. But his record of economic success was hard to argue with. Mondale's talk about compassion, caring and other charitable virtues meant little in the face of a two-year economic boom that has cut more than three points off the unemployment rate and boosted overall production a sturdy 12 percent.

But the Reagan recovery, seemingly so unassailable during the campaign, has been cracking these last few months. Economic experts (rarely a reliable bunch) disagree as to whether the current phase is a lull, a "growth recession" (meaning a slow climb in unemployment) or an out-and-out recession marked by negative growth and rapidly mounting joblessness. Nonetheless, a marked slowdown is underway. The only unknown is its depth.

Evidence that a corner has been turned is widespread. Economic growth, which began this year at a frenetic 10.1 percent annual rate, slowed to just 1.9 percent this summer and shows every sign of slowing further this fall and winter. Industrial production rose a negligible 0.1 percent in August but then fell 0.6 percent in September. New orders for American manufactures declined a total of 2.6 percent in August and September. The index of leading economic indicators, the government's prime barometer of impending economic change, rose moderately in September but only after falling each of the three months before.

Moreover, unemployment, that all-important index by which governments rise and fall, also appears to be turning upward. The rate has held steady at about 7.5 percent most of the year, but recently the number of laid-off workers first applying for jobless benefits has been rising and, as of about a month ago, was at the highest level in nearly a year.

Tepid retail sales, declining durable goods orders, uncertainty on the stock exchange, etc.—virtually each passing day brings fresh evidence that something is amiss. Two recent developments, the decline in interest rates and the falling value of the dollar, might normally be positive, but probably not now.

The first is evidence that corporations see less opportunity to expand and therefore less need to borrow to pay for that expansion. The second reflects the per-

ception abroad that the go-go days of the Reagan recovery are probably over. Even the fall in the price of oil from \$29 a barrel to \$27 and OPEC's inability to do anything about it is less than an unalloyed blessing. Weak energy prices were the prime factor in at least 63 bank failures so far this year and experts warn that if prices continue to lower, many more dominoes will fall.

If a full-blown recession is pending, it is likely to be severe, with sweeping consequences for Reaganomics, for socialism and for Third World nationalism. The world economy is far weaker than in 1981, when the last slide into recession began. The international debt crisis, involving loans to Third World nations totaling upward of \$750 billion, is now in its third year. Concerted negotiations, "reschedulings" (in which principal and interest payments are simply postponed year to year) and promises of fresh bank credit have so far kept giant debtors like Brazil, Mexico and Argentina from sliding into default.

Equally important in that process have been huge increases in American imports from those regions. A recent report by the Morgan Guaranty bank found that Argentina had increased its exports to the U.S. 33.6 percent over last year, Brazil by 57.3 percent and Mexico (suffering under the weak oil market) by 12.1 percent. The U.S. is equally important as an export market for West Europe, which has never quite shaken off the effects of the 1981-82 recession. Since last year, Germany's sales to this country have increased 39.8 percent, France's by 39.2 percent, Britain's by 20.5 percent and Italy's by 46.3 percent.

Uncle Sam, in short, is the kind of big-time spender who excites passions and jealousies among shop owners, tavern keepers and restaurateurs whenever he pulls into town. But what will happen when American largesse fades?

Other points of instability that did not exist in 1981 are the yawning budget deficit (currently \$175 billion a year), the gaping trade deficit (now at \$150 billion per annum) and the over-valued, over-blown dollar, which now purchases nine French francs whereas four years ago it barely purchased four. All three are inter-related and all result from the extreme

discordance between Reagan's ultra-Keynesian, supply-side economics and the anti-inflationary, tight lending policies of Paul A. Volcker, the redoubtable chairman of the Federal Reserve.

The mismatch is most often compared to driving with one foot on the accelerator and the other on the brake, and the process by which it works its destruction is by now well known. Needless to say, Reagan would prefer to plug his budget gap by, in essence, printing money through a loosening of credit. But with Volcker the stern Dutch uncle blocking his way, he is forced to pay a penalty in the form of stiff interest rates. The administration's heavy borrowings drive those rates up still further, which in turn makes American treasury notes and banking certificates of deposits that much more attractive to investors abroad. Since those notes, bond and CDs are denominated in U.S. dollars, the dollar is driven up in value as well. Simultaneously, the price of foreign goods is lowered and the price of American products raised.

*If a full-blown recession is in the works, it is likely to be severe.*

The result is a boon to American consumers. French table wine, which was priced stiffly at \$8 a magnum in 1980, is now a steal at \$5. Once prohibitively expensive countries like France and Switzerland now swarm with American tourists, each trying to cram in the most sights, the best meals and the highest-ranking hotel accommodations for the least money possible. Each has been thrilled at how far the dollar has gone and, to show their gratitude, most cast their vote for Ronald Reagan, the kindly old gent who made the buying binge possible.

But if the deficit, in the form of reduced taxes and heightened military spending, stimulated the economy at the start of the Reagan boom, it is now having the opposite effect. Normally, an

Continued on page 22



By Richard B. DuBoff

**F**OR TRUE CAPITALISM-watchers, the distribution of wealth in the form of income-producing property might be the single most revealing economic statistic. Income distribution figures are important, but if "capitalism" has any meaning it is private control of society's means of production and income generating process.

In the United States, this "business system" has been extraordinarily successful in separating, in the public mind, its economic compulsions from their social impact. Environmental, women's and minority rights, occupational safety, peace and other activists might be aided in their assaults on the corporate citadel by hard information about the giant gap between the social costs of capitalism and the narrow base to which a disproportionate part of its benefits goes. Data on distribution of wealth cut to the heart of the issue. They have greater shock value than income distribution profiles, which suffer from overexposure, and still seem just and fair to many Americans who retain faith in the rewards of individualistic striving. But statistics that demonstrate the real likelihood of putting away that coveted "nest egg" are merciless. This may be why, as *The New York Times'* Peter Kilborn reported, the distribution of wealth study just released by the Federal Reserve Board "caused some discomfort in the Reagan administration."

The survey, conducted by the Federal Reserve and six other federal agencies, seeks "a comprehensive understanding of the financial state of households" in the wake of sweeping changes in financial institutions and services in recent years. In compiling an inventory of consumers' assets and liabilities, this survey supplies much new information on household balance sheets, income and financial behavior. The first installment, in the September *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, offers a too-rare glimpse into trends in asset ownership and wealth distribution.

The accompanying table presents the study's findings on holdings of financial assets by "families" of one or more, corrected for the effects of inflation between 1970 and 1983. "Total financial assets" include liquid assets (checking, savings and money market accounts; individual retirement and Keogh accounts; certificates of deposit; savings bonds), plus corporate stocks, nontaxable bonds, other bonds and trusts. Only one family in twenty has managed to amass the \$100,000 that can furnish even a poverty-level income in case of unemployment or disability or retirement; \$100,000 prudently invested, earns a \$9,000 or \$10,000 annual return. The official poverty threshold is \$5,061 for individuals and \$10,178 for a family of four.

More substantial wealth — at least \$250,000 in financial assets — is limited to two percent of the population, perhaps less. At the other end of the scale, half of all families had \$2,300 in income-yielding assets or less. This median-figure means more than the average of \$24,128, a figure pulled up extremely large holdings of a handful of families.

The inclusion of wealth represented by equity in homes (the property's market value less the amount of first-mortgage debt) would make the table's data look only momentarily better. Home ownership rates, and values, increase step-by-step with family income, and presumably with wealth levels too. In 1983 only 36 percent of families with annual incomes below \$10,000 owned their own homes, the Fed's study shows, compared with 89 percent of families with incomes of \$50,000 or more. The average net equity follows the same rule of thumb — \$40,000 for the homes of the \$10,000 a year or less families, rising only to \$56,000 for those with incomes of \$30,000 to \$49,999.

Ten percent of the nation's families earn \$50,000 or more; in 1983 their net home equities averaged \$101,000.

Once a home is sold, a new residence must be found. Invested sales proceeds of \$56,000 would provide enough income to purchase little more than equivalent housing. Furthermore, home values do not confer economic power the way income-pro-

ducing assets do.

The large wealth holders are, not surprisingly, the top income receivers as well. Families with \$50,000 of annual income, the upper ten percent, had the biggest portfolios in 1983, with an average of \$125,131 worth of financial assets (excluding personal real estate). However, just as the richest wealth holders category (five percent with at least \$100,000 in financial assets) obscures still higher degrees of wealth concentration, so the \$125,131 figure throws only a limited amount of light on how much wealth lies in the hands of a choice few.

The median asset position for the \$50,000-a-year-plus families in 1983 was \$31,658. In other words, only half of these top-tenth income families possessed financial assets worth more than \$31,658. Only half of them reported owning any stock, while less than one-sixth reported owning bonds.

In this connection, the survey's authors remark that "ownership of every type of asset is an increasing function of income," rising "dramatically from the lowest to the highest family income groups." Data regarding ownership of specific kinds of assets provide striking illustrations. In 1983 the top two percent of all income recipients — those earning \$100,000 a year or more — controlled 30 percent of all financial assets, 20 percent of all real estate, one-third of all net business interests. Nonliquid financial assets are even more tightly concentrated "in a small number of families with very high incomes": the top two percent of

## PERSPECTIVES

# Wealth distribution study causes tinge of discomfort

18 percent of all personal net worth, 9 percent of all real estate, 47 percent of all corporate stock, 36 percent of all bonds, 8 percent of total cash balances.

These figures were based on a study published in the *American Economic Review* ten years ago by James Smith and Stephen Franklin, who found that the distribution of wealth remained essentially unchanged between 1945 and 1969. Smith and Franklin concluded that wealth became distributed more equally only in the 1930s and early 1940s, "two periods of massive government intervention in the marketplace...periods when the market system was functioning under duress or was in administrative abeyance."

And income disparities are growing. Vir-

years. The Fed's survey confirms these trends. Between 1969 and 1982, the proportion of all families earning less than \$15,000 a year (in constant 1982 dollars) rose from 29 to 39 percent. The bottom 70 percent of all families lost ground, getting 43 percent of total family income in 1969 and 38 percent in 1982. Nearly all of their losses were recouped by the top tenth, whose income share climbed from 29 percent to 33.

Assessments of real after-tax income are no different. According to the August report of the liberal Urban Institute, the "statistically average family" now has \$705 more in real after-tax income than in 1980, but its 1984 income of \$21,038 is still \$232 below its 1979 level. Only the top 20 percent of families have enjoyed a substantial rise (8.7 percent) in real disposable incomes. The bottom 40 percent have less now than four years ago. Rough corroboration comes from the conservative Tax Foundation.

Meanwhile, as might be expected from these relative income shiftings, since 1977 the national savings rate of disposable income continues to average, at most, six percent, well below the seven to eight percent rate of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Obviously, the squeeze on middle-income earners has further compressed this normally small margin of savings. Record-high interest rates of recent years have slowed investment and housing construction component and encouraged consumption, a development that strengthens the belief that middle-income savings, and financial asset holdings, have stagnated compared to the wealth of the rich.

Add to this the regressive effects of Reaganomics, which has increased taxes and cut government benefits for every group except families making more than \$75,000 per year, and one has the necessary ingredients for a sizable redistribution of income, and wealth, to those who already have more than enough.

Nor is that all. Beginning with the Tax Reform Act of 1976, and accelerating with Reagan's Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, the federal estate tax — the only tax designed to reduce the concentration of wealth — is being slashed. By 1987 the "unified credit" will exempt from federal death taxes all estates up to \$600,000, so that the tax will apply only to the top 0.3 percent of all estates. Even for them rates will be lowered.

Wealth is accumulated not only for personal enrichment but for its economic power. That kind of power, Lester Thurow reminds us, "entails the ability to order others about." But that may be the lesser danger. Wealth is deployed to spin a shroud around antidemocratic operations, so as to hide the ways private influence is brought to bear upon matters of great public import. The lower the tier of government the more powerful the leverage of a dollar of wealth, another reason why Reaganites want to "return government to states and localities where it belongs." With Reagan now putting the federal government itself to work for the rich, it is more important than ever to place the dimensions — and sources — of their wealth on clear public view. It is a tribute to the shallowness of the past election campaign that no candidate, at least to my knowledge, even referred to these new wealth distribution statistics that "caused some discomfort" in Meeseville.

Richard DuBoff teaches economics at Bryn Mawr College.

## The chances of putting away a "nest egg" are more and more remote for larger and larger numbers of Americans.

the income pyramid owns 71 percent of the dollar value of tax-free bonds, 50 percent of corporate stock, and 39 percent of other bonds.

In the last previous examinations of wealthholding patterns, for 1972 and 1976, the richest 0.5 percent of the population — one person in 200 — owned an average of

usually every income distribution series now shows a deterioration for all but the top 10 or 20 percent. The Census Bureau estimates that the lowest fifth's share of aggregate family income before taxes dropped from 5.4 percent in 1970 to 4.7 percent in 1982, and the middle 60 percent's share from 53.6 to 52.6 percent during these same

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS BY DOLLAR AMOUNTS OWNED (CONSTANT 1983 DOLLARS)

	1970	1983
None	16	12
\$1-999	22	27
\$1,000-4,999	22	22
\$5,000-9,999	11	10
\$10,000-24,999	12	12
\$25,000-49,999	7	7
\$50,000-99,999	5	5
\$100,000 and more	5	5
TOTAL	100%	100%
Mean	\$23,295	24,128
Median	\$2,307	2,300



IT'S NOT THAT HE'S REALLY AN OLD MISER, TINY TIM... IT'S JUST HE BELIEVES IN NEW FEDERALISM...

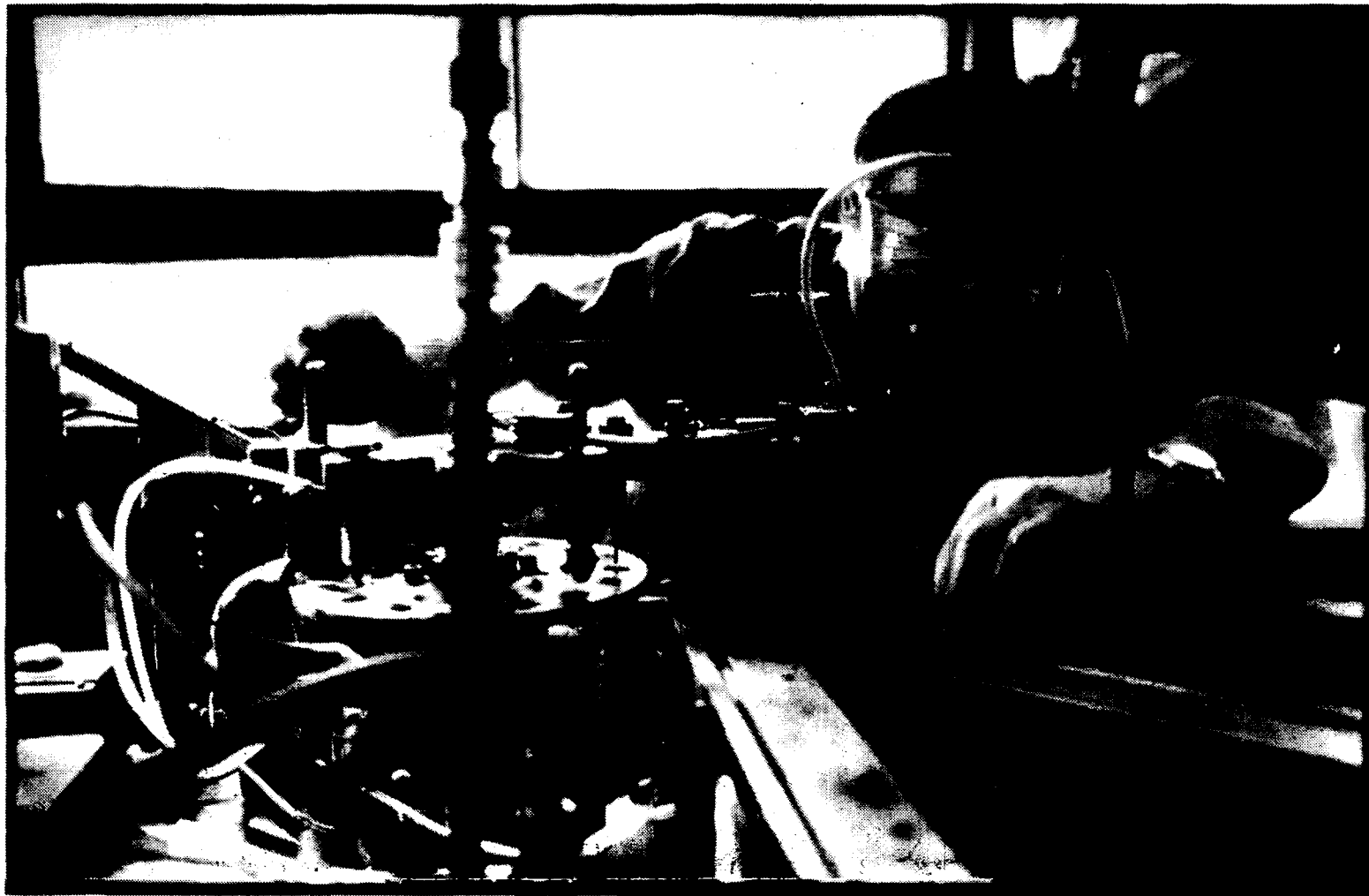
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## INPRINT

## WORK

# Books of life-on-the-job by the people who live it



Robert D. Jumper

## A Machinist's Semi-Automated Life

By Roger Tulin  
Singlejack Books (Box 1906, San Pedro, Cal. 90733) 43pp.  
\$3.50

## A Year in the Life of a Factory

By Maynard Seider  
Singlejack Books, 152 pp.  
\$7.75

### By Staughton Lynd

The term "singlejack" originated with the hardrock miners of the American West. Drilling holes for the insertion of dynamite was a tough and dangerous job. Miners worked in pairs, with one kneeling to hold the steel drill, which he turned slowly as his partner drove it into the rock with blows from a sledge (or jack) hammer.

Now and then the miners switched jobs. Since the job demanded as much mutual trust as skill, many lasting friendships were formed. (Sometimes, after the dynamite was inserted, it failed to explode and inadvertently was left in the hole. This was known as a "missed hole." A miner who later struck the dynamite with a pick would be blown to bits. A song my father learned from copper miners in Wyoming in the early 20s contains the phrase, "a missed hole found a miner gone.")

Around the turn of the century, on-the-job organizers for the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World used the term "singlejack" to describe the kind of organizing where dedicated advocates are developed one at a time on a highly personalized basis — as between partners.

The creators of Singlejack Books chose this rich historical

concept to describe what they hoped their books might mean to readers. Singlejack books are writings about life on-the-job by the people who live it, as well as books that working people will find of practical use. Ideally a Singlejack book evokes (in the words of the publisher) "that special time when, for the reader, a book becomes both hammer and drill — opening up ever new areas of understanding."

*A Machinist's Semi-Automated Life* comes closer to achieving this aspiration than any Singlejack book yet to appear. Roger Tulin has worked in machine shops in the American Northeast for the last nine years. For many of these years, night-time hours were spent studying for a degree in sociology, and then, writing this book.

According to historian of industrial relations David Noble, roughly three-quarters of all the metal working manufacture in the US takes place in small non-unionized machinestops, like that described in *A Machinist's Life*. These shops have recently been revolutionized by the introduction of

computerized machine tools.

After a few days on the job, Tulin was taken off the manual drill press on which he was working and told to "give Marty a hand" by operating a numerically controlled milling machine. "Like all numerically controlled tools," he comments, "this one was far from being a self-sufficient robot." Unless the operator accurately instructed the machine exactly where to begin its work the miller would produce a pile of expensive junk. Tulin had previously run a similar machine but all the buttons and levers and dials were in different places. Three times he had to ask Marty for help. Each time Marty did what was needed to get the machine running, but so rapidly that Tulin was not able to keep track of the sequence. Tension between the two men mounted.

Then Marty came back over. "I apologize for what I did earlier," he said. "There was no excuse for that." Marty went on to describe the frustrations of doing skilled work over which he had absolutely no control. Finally he found a way to say what bothered him most:

*You know, I saw an ad put out by a company that makes these machines. They had monkeys in the pictures, running the machines. Monkeys! That's how they see what I'm doing down here.*

Several days later Tulin and Marty searched around the shop and found the ad. Marty said: "Working people should not be made to look like that."

Numerically controlled machine tools were invented in the early 50s, when the Air Force demanded complex curves that no machinist could cut with sufficient accuracy. Had machinists been permitted to take part in designing and prog-

ramming the new tools, their experience of craft and skill could have been enhanced. Instead they were relegated to the remaining tasks that neither the programmers nor the machine itself could perform.

Tulin's fellow workers coped in different ways. "Fearless Freddie" excelled in producing pieces in half the time called for by the specifications, just to show he could do it. He then "banked" these extra pieces, gradually turning them in as he finished the week at a leisurely pace. Tulin himself felt better about life after an evening when he brought to the workshop a small metal dog that was part of

hospital he would be forced to retire. Meantime, they missed his willingness to do the tough, fussy jobs that other people hated. "His knowledge went far beyond what he had to do. He knew trigonometry [and] calculus. I remembered his satisfaction with a job he had done the month before: 'I had to hold a slot to size within half a thousandth and location to within half a degree. I used a sine bar. I held it.' Now Al wasn't there to do these jobs."

Unexpectedly Al got a blood clot and died. On payday of the week he died, his son and two friends of the family appeared at the shop to auction off Al's tools. One of the visitors said: "Pay whatever you think's fair... We're just trying to get something for the widow." Tulin bought Al's depth micrometers.

Weeks later a taciturn fellow worker suddenly mentioned Al.

"You know the guy that died? Al?" he asked. "He was forgotten the next day. No one cared about him. And he was a man who cared very much about his work. I used to ride the bus with him. He hardly talked about anything else. He spent his life paying attention to all this..." He waved his hand at the drills, the lathes, the Bridgeports. "But he was forgotten. It's the system, man. You're only worth what you do right then."

*A Year In The Life Of A Factory*, written by a man whose year in a factory was an interval between academic jobs, lacks the poetry of *A Machinist's Life*. Still, Maynard Seider learned and shares a great deal, about the winding room in the transformer factory south of San Francisco where he worked in 1973-74, about the negotiations and strike he experienced, and perhaps most incisively, about making transformers vs. teaching college students.

Seider compares college teaching favorably to factory work with regard to such matters as not punching a time clock, access to a telephone, freedom to visit a bathroom whenever the need arises, and control over one's immediate work situation. He argues that beneath the surface factory work has a number of advantages, however. Teachers work essentially by themselves. They often have little opportunity for peer group support during the work process. In a factory, by contrast, the group is so integral a part of the environment that it tends to be taken for granted.

*Its proven effectiveness in protecting the rights of workers has led management to use scientific management, industrial engineering, deskilling, and just plain force to break up or minimize group-based solidarity. Nonetheless, factory, mine, and mill workers keep rebuilding it.*

Seider suggests that "[a]s the difficulties of making a living increase for industrial workers and college teachers alike, there is reason to think that the structure of both types of work will come to look more and more alike."

Both these books contribute to Singlejack's fundamental effort "to make work a public issue." They remind us that, however we make a living, work is the primary way in which a human being establishes the significance of his or her life. They challenge us to create a society in which work can be something more than a penance endured for the sake of livelihood, in which work can indeed (in Kahlil Gibran's phrase) become "love made visible."

**Staughton Lynd** is a legal services attorney in Youngstown, Ohio.

The creators  
of Singlejack  
Books main  
effort is to  
"make work  
a public  
issue."





**Jitterbug Perfume**  
By Tom Robbins  
Bantam, 342 pp.,  
\$15.95

By Paul Skenazy

*Jitterbug Perfume* is less a novel than a theatrical review, a pastiche of scenes, devices, ideas and cute lines. As in his previous works — *Another Roadside Attraction*, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* and *Still Life with Woodpecker* — Tom Robbins has made narrative of whimsy. He is at once both mocking and affectionate, able to see the world as quite awful but people as quite fine, venomously opposed to social institutions while not allowing any civilized madness to ruin a good joke or good time.

Robbins' cleverness keeps us giggling by cracking a pun every few pages, and by littering his scenes with outlandish similes (a ship slides through water "as slickly as an asparagus spear gliding through a serving of hollandaise sauce"). He is childlike with his charm, unabashedness and self-satisfaction.

His new novel displays him at his best and worst. As the title implies, it is a dance of scents and

nonsense, a slapstick comedy of jasmine and beets, that combines the odors of a lecherous Greek God Pan, who is half-man, half-goat, and the temptations of immortality. The book is more about ideas than people — the characters are toys Robbins moves across the rug of his mind. And, it is both insistent to entertain and persistent in its passion to educate.

The theme is fun. It is in the form of a mock-epic journey through time of a man, Alobar by name, bent on immortality. Refusing to sacrifice himself in a tribal death ritual, Alobar escapes execution and embarks on an overhill-and-daleish career wandering through civilizations and epochs, stopping along the way for some conversations with Pan, some dallying among the nymphs, a few careers and an eternal marriage to Kudra, an incense-maker uninterested in sacrificial burial beside her deceased husband. Eventually the two find themselves in the Paris of Louis XIV (a city primed to "put Descartes before des horse"), where they become perfume merchants until a visit from Pan causes such an epidemic of erotic dreams in the nearby monastery that they are forced to flee: Kudra to the

## FICTION

# Tom Robbins: still another flip distraction

Other Side to see about the immortality of death, Alobar to the New World in the hope of finding a resurrecting faith in Pan there.

Waiting for them 900 years and a couple 100 pages away in the present are a waitress named Priscilla in Seattle, her stepmother in New Orleans and the famous LeFever family of perfumers in Paris. They are being bombarded with beets — yes, beets — deposited ceremonially at their doorsteps by Wiggs Dannyboy, head of the Last Laugh Foundation, a group committed to the study of longevity. Past and present, the beets and the incense and

the mass of characters all merge eventually in a series of coincidences that seem destined to provide eternal happiness and a bundle of money to everybody.

As we move merrily along this comic bunny trail, we hear of the Bandaloops, meditate on the perfect taco and learn more about perfume than we want or need to know. Robbins treats history as fodder for his stand-up comedy routine. We leap across time, pun our way through ideas ("I stink, therefore I am"). We get some charming if slightly vapid advice about life ("live by the heart if you would life forever"), discover that

we "moderns" are "orphans of Pan," and watch bemused when the mythic goat-spirit fades into invisibility as belief in him fades, a kind of pathetic if smelly Tinkerbell victimized by civilization's turn to Christianity, mercantilism and urbanization.

It's hard to know how long anyone will enjoy reading this literary leg-pulling. The episodes all start to sound similar. The only technique Robbins seems to know is frenetic cleverness, which proves an inadequate substitute for imagination over the long haul. He designs his effects skillfully and executes his jokes beautifully, but by the end what he says has about as much weight as cotton candy.

And Robbins has a lot to say at the end. His last pages are stuffed with theories and speeches that he delivers in just the kind of pontifical tone he had so gracefully managed to mock earlier. He rewrites the past as a psychic progress from reptilian to mammalian to "floral" consciousness. He bemoans the way each of us is altered from "red-faced, round, intense, pure" infancy to excremental adulthood by devouring parents, schools, peers, bad habits and social institutions. He is distressed by our contemporary lack of "authentic experience," the way diversity has been sacrificed to the "artificial, synthetic, watered-down, and standardized."

### Old-fashioned faith

Robbins' message is "Erleichda" — lighten up. The word is written above the door that opens between the dead and the living — it is Einstein's last word as he gives up the ghost. For all of Robbins' pranks and innuendo, the "lesson of the beet," it turns out, is only old-fashioned faith that innocence, the good heart and a sense of humor will make life fun: "hold on to your divine blush, your innate rosy magic." His characters bounce off adversity with a joke in their hearts and a jibe on their lips.

It is this message of hearty good fellowship that his publishers must be referring to when they advertise Robbins as "a serious writer who isn't afraid to show his readers a good time." But the joyful surprises and comforting satisfactions he offers are only a benign face masking a smug narcissistic feeling of privilege, a sense of exemption from the human lot. Granted eternal life, his characters need never fear disappointment.

Robbins is the inheritor of a flip and iconoclastic literary stance of snotty earnestness characteristic of the 60s. (Think of the hero of *Car's Cradle*, lying on the ground, thumbing his nose at God in a gesture less a product of rage than a demonstration of impotent pride.) Writers like Robbins or Vonnegut offer a playfulness, a resourceful use of language and a subversive ribaldry. Their fiction is more concerned with fate than environment, their protagonists more interested in God than their neighbors and the writers themselves often more fascinated by puns than character or even plot. Their characteristic weapon against pain and a malign universe is ridicule.

Robbins is a priest of the Age of Aquarius, using his comedy to denounce the inheritance of the mind and the body politic ("politics is always a depressant"). His anarchic vision is finally self-indulgent. If *Jitterbug Perfume* lacks staying power, it's not because Robbins hasn't developed an enticing scent, but rather because his formula is so commonplace. ■

Paul Skenazy teaches literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz.



By Jon Kalish

## ART &gt;&gt; ENTERTAINMENT

## FILM — INTERVIEW

## Reality gets reel treatment

The story of an American and a Cambodian journalist who became close friends while covering the bloody civil war in Cambodia during the 1970's has been documented in a powerful new feature film, *The Killing Fields*. Based on the lives of *New York Times* reporter Sydney Schanberg and his Cambodian assistant Dith Pran, the film covers the events surrounding the fall of the Lon Nol government in 1975 and the subsequent reign of terror imposed by the Khmer Rouge regime.

Schanberg was one of a handful of western journalists who remained in Phnom Penh in April 1975 when the Khmer Rouge seized power. He won a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting "at great risk" after ignoring pleas from his editors to leave Cambodia. Dith was his right hand man who served as a driver, photographer and interpreter.

"He was my assistant, my fixer, my arranger, my chum, my brother" said Schanberg during an interview at his office at the *Times*.

The fraternal feeling is shared by Dith.

"If something happened to him, I wouldn't leave him alone," said Dith in broken English. "And I know when something happens to me he wouldn't leave me alone. That's why life between him and me has become brotherhood."

In a *New York Times Magazine* story that the movie was based on, Schanberg wrote: "Our lives proceeded from one intense experience to another."

That's an understatement. During the period the two worked together, 1972 to 1975, they were

placed under house arrest for trying to photograph the execution of a civilian by government soldiers, made numerous visits to the blood-drenched wards of Cambodian hospitals and on more than one occasion, Dith saved Schanberg's life.

On April 17, 1975, the day the Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh, Schanberg and John Swain who worked for the *Sunday Times* of London were taken into custody by Khmer Rouge soldiers. Ordered inside an armored personnel carrier with a small group of foreigners, they

were bewildered by Dith's pleas to be taken prisoner with them. The film shows the short, thin Cambodian cupping his hands in prayer begging Khmer Rouge soldiers to spare Schanberg's life. Dith, Schanberg, Swain and the other foreigners were freed and they promptly made their way to the French embassy.

The confrontation quickly sobered them up to the brutality of the Khmer Rouge, which they had not anticipated.

"I didn't believe there would be a bloodbath because I knew the background of the Khmer Rouge

leaders," Dith says in retrospect. "Three of them used to be legislators in the Sihanouk regime. We knew they were left wing but they were very good to the people."

After three days at the French embassy, Dith was forced out when the Khmer Rouge ordered all Cambodians off the embassy grounds. It was a moment of great anguish for Schanberg.

"We watched Pran go out and there was nothing we could do," Schanberg recalled. "It was a very hopeless moment."

The two friends would be separated for more than four years. Dith

## Politi film chronicles Israel's pioneer women



Filmmaker Edna Politi, Yetka (l to r), Emma and Mita recall the intense idealism of their youth in *Anou Banou: The Daughters of Utopia*.

By K. Kaufmann

Edna Politi's vision of the Middle East is — like the woman herself — complex and controversial. The Jewish filmmaker was born in Saida, Lebanon in 1948 and grew up in Beirut's Jewish community. In 1966, she moved to Israel and

lived there for six years, witnessing the changes in Israeli society and politics brought on by the 1967 Six-Day War.

Politi went to Germany to study filmmaking in 1972. She now lives and works in France, where she is known for her leftist and pro-Palestinian views.

Politi's work was screened in

the U.S. for the first time last August, when her most recent film, *Anou Banou: The Daughters of Utopia*, opened the 5th annual Jewish Film Festival in San Francisco.

A forgotten chapter of Mideast history, the film chronicles the lives and dreams of a handful of Jewish women, the pioneers of

their age, who left their homes in Eastern Europe and settled Palestine in the '20s. Their stories of youthful idealism, the obstacles overcome and achievements gained, provide unexpected insights into the history of Zionism and the role of sexual politics in Israel today.

Scheduled for limited release in the U.S. this winter *Anou Banou* will most likely be compared with *Seeing Red* and *The Good Fight*, two other documentaries recalling moments in history when, for a young and hopeful generation, real social change seemed possible. Like those two, Politi's film recreates the mood of its time through old photos, film, songs and the memories of pioneer women still living in Israel today.

*Anou Banou* is, however, more than an historical documentary; it redefines the genre. Rather than just recreating the past, Politi has opened it up like a window through which we can see and better understand the present. In *Anou Banou* we see not only the sepia-tone films and photos of Jewish settlers breaking ground for the first kibbutzim (communal farms) in the '20s, but current footage of Palestinian workers laying tiles for a new farm building. We hear not only the voices of the old pioneers, but those of young women growing up in Israel today.

The pioneer women were themselves only in their teens and early twenties when they came to Palestine during the third great wave of immigration (or *aliyah*) in the '20s. They left behind them the ghettos and pogroms of Eastern Europe and Russia, and lives circumscribed by their status as women and Jews.

Palestine represented a new frontier, the opportunity to build — literally from the ground up — a new life and social order based on socialist-feminist principles of growth and equality. *Anou Banou*, words from a Hebrew folksong of the time, means "to build the country by building themselves."

Politi has done a first-rate job of recovering this significant piece of women's history which, even in Israel, has been neglected and obscured. Her portraits of six remarkable pioneer women are both appealing and uncompromising, rich with human details and contradictions.

In photographs and film footage of the time, culled by Politi from Israeli archives, they appear by turns as grave young women, facing the camera for formal portraits,

and exuberant pioneers, waving a hammer from the top of a rockpile or grinning beneath the brim of a man's cap, bloomers rolled to the knee, on a construction site. Now in their '80s, Emma, Yetka, Yehudit, Mita, Pnina and Rachel recall the intense idealism and commitment of their youth and attempt to reconcile these memories with the present State of Israel they worked so hard to create.

Yetka, for example, pioneered collective child care and schools on her kibbutz, convinced that education was the key to creating a progressive society. Today, young women on the kibbutz say that the education system is used to channel girls into traditional roles, specifically as wives, mothers and child-care workers. They speak of their own feelings of frustration and claustrophobia, the sense that there is nothing new for them to do.

The few that have been able to get nontraditional jobs must withstand constant verbal harassment from male coworkers. Most see their own futures in Politi's images of their older, married sisters: walking behind awkward, oversized Israeli prams — really cribs on wheels — pushing babies around the kibbutz.

For Israeli women, the frontiers of the past have closed quickly. Emma, a writer and former member of the Knesset (Parliament), recalls that from the beginning of the state, her party, Mapam (socialist), always reserved at least one seat on its election list for a woman. Today, she notes quietly, Mapam has no women in the Knesset.

The Arab-Israeli conflict presents an even bigger contradiction for the pioneer women, and they are visibly uncomfortable with it. The Zionism that brought them to Palestine in the '20s had assumed implicitly the manifest destiny of the Jews. When the women speak of their early contacts with the Arabs, the memories echo 18th- and 19th-century Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward Native Americans.

The Arabs had valuable knowledge of the land, Emma, Mita and Yetka remember, and in the beginning, the Jews went to them for planting and other agricultural advice. On the other hand, they considered Arab culture primitive and alien.

The Arabs didn't need as much to survive as the Jews; their standard of living was lower. The idea that the Arabs had just as much right to the land as they did, or in





Sydney Schanberg and Dith Pran in Cambodia.

some cases possibly more, seems never to have occurred to them.

Politi handles this politically sensitive material with honesty and integrity. Respectful of the women's ages and limits, she does not intrude her own views on them or push their occasional, fretful silences. Faced with evidence of Israeli aggression in the Mideast, however, she does not remain silent herself.

In a voice-over introduction, Politi tells us that she edited *Anou Banou* during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and describes the conflict and sorrow she felt at the time. She ends the film with a dedication to her friend Emil Grunzweig who was killed by a hand grenade (allegedly thrown by a right-wing extremist) at a demonstration in Israel on February 10, 1983. He was the first Jew to die protesting his country's military actions in Lebanon.

*Anou Banou's* combination of personal sensibility and political analysis is striking, particularly for American audiences raised on the void of social/political context in Hollywood movies. For Politi, however, there is little possibility of separation. One of the main goals of her work, she says, is to chart the interface of personal and political forces in our daily lives; to reveal that tenuous middle ground where human existence actually takes place.

In San Francisco for the festival opening, Politi talked with *In These Times* about her memories of the Middle East and some of the personal and political forces in her own life and work.

Politi does not define herself as exclusively Lebanese, Israeli or Jewish. She is, she said, all of

**"What you see in the Mideast is ignorance on both sides."**

them. "It's very difficult to say I'm just one thing, but I consider that more as a richness than a disadvantage," she explained. "I don't think you have to have a primary identity. It is very clear that I belong to the Middle East."

One of the things she remembered most vividly about the Middle East prior to the Six-Day War

is how little the people in different countries knew about each other.

"Before the '67 war in Lebanon, you knew scarcely anything about Israel cause the whole subject was very taboo," Politi recalled. "People didn't speak about Israel, because of fear, I guess. You couldn't say the word 'Israel' at that time."

After moving to Jerusalem in 1966, Politi found the ignorance of Arab culture there equally striking.

"I grew up in an Arab country, studied Arabic and French, and had a very strong Arabic culture which I liked very much," she said. "It was very funny to come to Israel and, very slowly, see this huge gap. Most of the Israeli friends I had didn't know at all what is Arab culture, what are the Arabs really."

After the '67 war, Politi became involved in left political circles that were among the first in Israel to call for a withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Immediate recognition of Palestinian cultural and political autonomy is still, she said, the only real solution for the Middle East.

However, she cautioned, before there can be peace, there must be trust. And for trust to exist between Arab and Jew, the legacy of ignorance must be undone. What is needed most, Politi stressed, is constant and continual education:

"Information. Information. All the time. All the time. What you see [in the Middle East] is ignorance from both sides about the others and about oneself, about what is oneself's real history. And it is growing everyday worse. I am not sure if people who don't know what they are are able to make peace. It's a very existential position, but I'm convinced of it."

Politi illustrated her point with the evolution of Zionism from the utopian ideals expressed by the women of *Anou Banou* to the political pragmatism embodied in the current policies of the Israeli government.

"What these people wanted, these pioneer people, was not to go to a place just to be safe," she noted. "Their dream — and this is what the film is about — was to create a new people; what Yehudit says, to renew the human being in yourself. That is what made the whole Zionist dream worthwhile. The whole thing about wanting to be in a safe place came much later in Israel, out of World War II."

The history of Zionist ideals and

the Jewish settlers who brought them to the Middle East is apparently no longer taught in many Israeli schools.

When *Anou Banou* opened in Israel, Politi said, it drew mostly audiences of young people who knew little of their country's early history, even though it occurred only 60 years ago. She had found a similar break in the historical record when she began to research the film.

Politi had stumbled across some extracts from the diaries of the pioneer women about 10 years ago, while doing background work for her first film, *An Israelite Witness for the Palestinians*.

"I found it fantastic what they were telling from their lives," she remembered. "At the time, I got the idea for making this film [and] tried to get money; it took me 10 years. When I began to work on the film itself, I was sure I would find a lot of books and probably films which had been made on the subject. I found almost nothing, except two books which were published in the '40s."

The books, Politi added, are long out of print and available only in Israeli archives. Also, when she finally did get funding for *Anou Banou*, it came, ironically, from German, not Israeli sources.

Politi's perseverance and determination in making *Anou Banou* reflect the depth of her commitment to her work as a filmmaker: for her, making films is a social function that carries with it social and moral responsibilities.

"If you look back in history, the art products which were consistent for their times and are still important to us today were always done by people who thought they had a certain moral responsibility," Politi asserted, "which means moral on all levels: moral socially, aesthetically and on a very general level as an individual. I cannot very much split between these levels. In order to make a film, I have to feel it very deeply."

"Artists have a responsibility toward reality; not just copying reality, but imagining and giving form to what reality can be," Edna Politi concluded. "Art in general is changing reality. You cannot just accept reality like it is."

For more information on *Anou Banou*, contact the Jewish Film Festival, 4560 Horton St., Ste. R407, Emeryville, CA 94608; (415) 428-1727.

K. Kaufmann is a San Francisco writer who writes regularly for *Spare Rib* and *Plexus*.

was stuck in a country that became a massive death camp and Schanberg returned to New York with tremendous feelings of guilt.

Dith spent 2½ years at a forced labor camp at Dam Dek where he endured torture, beatings and malnutrition at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. He spent another two years as a houseboy for the local commune chief in Bat Dangkor. When the Vietnamese toppled the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, Dith began a 60 mile trek to the Thai border with 11 other Cambodians, careful to avoid bamboo stakes, mine fields and roving Khmer Rouge patrols.

It took us four days and three nights," he said. "I believe that if the Khmer Rouge saw us escaping, they would have shot us because they didn't want the Cambodian people to leave Cambodia."

Back in New York, Schanberg was hoping that Dith would not join the three million Cambodians who were murdered, or who starved during the Khmer Rouge reign of terror.

"I had a lot of bad dreams," said Schanberg, "but in my waking moments I didn't allow myself to think he had perished. As long as I didn't get any news that he was dead, I clung to the notion that he was alive."

In October 1979 the two were reunited at a refugee camp on the Thai/Cambodian border.

"His emergence liberated me as much as it did him" Schanberg said. "It wasn't entirely rational of me but I believed I was totally responsible for him staying. I felt totally guilty."

But Dith discounts such feelings, saying: "I decided to stay because I am a journalist and I wanted to see what life would be like when the war was over. I wanted to see what the Khmer Rouge would do."

Roland Joffe, the director of *Killing Fields*, believes that rather than endangering Dith, Schanberg helped sustain him.

"The image of Sydney kept Pran alive" said Joffe. "One of the ways Pran kept himself strong enough to survive was by sending telexes to Sydney in his head. He felt that what he had to do was to send Sydney reports as a journalist."

The "telexes" Dith sends constitute some of the most dramatic scenes in the movie. In one sequence, Dith watches a teenage Khmer Rouge soldier kill a laborer in a rice paddy. "Sydney" Dith says to himself, "the war has killed love."

Dith is played by Dr. Haing Ngor, a Cambodian doctor whose experiences under the Khmer Rouge parallel Dith's to a frightening degree. Dr. Ngor crossed the Thai border within months of the time Dith crossed it.

"Like the real Dith Pran, he escaped from Cambodia to Thailand," said Joffe. "He lost his entire family and the woman he loved." Dith lost his father, three brothers and a sister. Dith and Ngor were subjected to torture and beatings and they both subsisted on leaves and insects during their escapes.

"I knew that to make the film work, we'd have to find a Cambodian," said Joffe.

The director said on more than one occasion Ngor and other Cambodians associated with the production were moved to tears by reliving the horror of the Khmer Rouge reign of terror. The scene

**Cambodians associated with the film were moved to tears by reliving the Khmer Rouge terror.**

in which the Khmer Rouge first marched into Phnom Penh was filmed in Bangkok with armored personnel carriers, the Thai Army, 2,000 extras and a lot of smoke.

"There was all the razzamatazz of a film going on," recalled Joffe, and standing on the side of the pavement was a small group of the wives and friends of the Cambodians who were with us in the film. They were standing there with tears streaming down their faces because at that moment they were really reminded of how they felt at the time the Khmer Rouge took over."

Dith and Schanberg were interviewed extensively for the film. Both were extremely pleased with the final product.

"They did a very, very good job," said Dith. "My children were shocked at the first screening because they didn't know what happened to me. Now they understand what I went through."

After his initial screening of the *Killing Fields*, Schanberg walked with director Mel Joffe and producer David Puttnam through midtown Manhattan. They stopped on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral anxious to hear Schanberg's assessment of the movie.

"I think it's stunning and I'm very proud to be part of it," Schanberg told the filmmakers. The three men proceeded to dance around on the steps of the cathedral, hugging and kissing.

Dith Pran now works as a general assignment news photographer for the *New York Times* based in New York City. Schanberg writes a bi-weekly column that appears on the paper's op-ed page. The column often deals with gentrification and other urban issues.

"It's a continuum," says Schanberg when asked to compare his reporting in Cambodia to his column. "The columns that I write now are in a way the result of that experience in Cambodia. The story of that war is the story of little people getting run over by bigger people and that happens in cities like New York and it happens in war. It's a universal story. My column is very often a story of little people struggling against people who aren't paying attention to them."

Schanberg still has a picture of Dith on a shelf behind his desk at the *Times*. The two get together at least once a week.

Dith says he would only return to Cambodia if it became a non-aligned country free of superpower domination. When asked if he would like to return to Cambodia to report, Schanberg replied, "It'll be important for me to go back someday. You have to do what we were doing there in the first place; you have to bear witness."

Jon Kalish is a New York based freelance reporter heard frequently on National Public Radio.



# Economy

Continued from page 16

economy at this stage of the business cycle would be propelled to a new high by stepped-up capital investment in manufacturing. But with the flood of cheap imports, American manufacturing is the last place to find a canny investor. Manufacturing employment is consequently falling and even the service sector, while far less sensitive to foreign competition, is beginning to feel the effects. Thus the slowdown begins.

When things are like this there is never an easy way out. The dollar, for instance, has fallen 5 percent in value since mid-October, but while an aid to domestic manufacturing, currency depreciation must lead sooner or later to inflation. Moreover, renewed inflation in the U.S.

would likely spark renewed selling of the dollar as speculators move to unload the currency before it is worth even less. Therefore, the danger is of an economic avalanche born of panic and pessimism—dollar depreciation followed by inflation, followed by more depreciation and more inflation in quickening succession.

In such an event, the likely response of the Federal Reserve would be to jack up interest rates to restore a measure of attractiveness to U.S. treasury notes and CDs and hence to the dollar itself. But that would weaken the economy still more and, by cutting into federal tax revenues, open up the budget deficit still further. Hence more federal borrowing, more upward pressure on interest rates, further economic weakening and on and on in a vicious financial spiral.

What about the Mondale remedy of higher taxes, a lid on federal spending (primarily for the military) and heightened trade protectionism to stem the

flood of imports? The recessionary effect of the first two is obvious. Higher taxes means diminished spending power, while a cut in federal expenditures would deprive the economy of much of the stimulus it has enjoyed since 1981.

It is the third element, however, that is the most radically destabilizing. There is no such thing as a little protectionism. Once it is unleashed, other nations are forced to take reprisals, and the system spreads with amazing rapidity, refashioning the world into trading blocks, economic spheres of influence and "protective" relationships between great powers and semi-colonial lands. Protectionism is a kind of economic war that leads to genuine war with startling speed.

Japan, for instance, had a more or less liberal government in the '20s that was anti-militarist and committed to free trade. With the crash of 1929, trade barriers sprang up all over the globe, first and foremost in the U.S., and Japan found itself shut out of the world markets. The discredited liberal government was then quickly shunted aside by militarists who used force to carve out a "co-prosperity sphere" in China and Korea.

Not for nothing, therefore, was free trade one of the essential props of the liberal-bourgeois international order imposed after World War II. Mondale, with typical blandness, seems to have had no idea how deeply disruptive his proposals would be. It is yet another example of the ineptitude and shallowness that made him so ineffectual.

Reaganomics may be expiring now or the system may have a way to go before admitting bankruptcy. But the crack-up, which must surely come, poses both great dangers and great opportunities. The great danger, of course, is the political desperation that inevitably results when a government's back is to the wall. And a Reagan administration that is cornered, trapped and desperate is a frightening prospect indeed.

On the other hand, Reagan's opponents may be driven to extremes as well. Stagnating world trade may force the

heavily indebted Third World to call an end to the farce of loan reschedulings and austerity plans (which are always for the poor, never for the rich). Third World debt repudiation would undoubtedly trigger an international financial firestorm, but, whatever the risks, safeguarding a few score multinational banks is hardly worth the price of further impoverishment of workers and peasants in Latin America, Africa and portions of Asia.

For the populations of the U.S. and other industrial nations, the prospects are equally hard. American industry was already gutted in the recession of 1981-82; can it be gutted again? Will another round of recession, joblessness, wage cuts and union busting push American workers to the left? Or will the more familiar combination of racism, jingoism and perhaps a further upsurge of religious fundamentalism be the response?

The left will also be faced with the choice of striking out in new directions or sticking with the same increasingly feeble policies. Perhaps—hopefully—1984 represented a final fling with liberal, welfare politics of the previous half-century. Leftists flirted first with Jesse Jackson, whose racially divisive politics proved even more self-defeating than in the late '60s, before turning to the Cold War anti-Communism of Walter Mondale. In a sense, those flirtations were the easy way out—a little Rainbow politics here, a little tinkering with the welfare system there, a bit of military buildup to appease the right and a little rhetoric about compassion and fairness to appease the left and—voilà!—the FDR-New Deal soufflé once again.

The poverty of this approach should by now be apparent. To be effective the socialist left will have to offer something meatier—an alternative to recurrent economic crises, mounting joblessness and paycuts. People do not want a handout or welfare—they want a job with decent pay. They also want a political ideology and rhetoric with vigor and strength.

Ronald Reagan has already given them that. Can the left respond in kind? ■

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# Scandal

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tember, Michael Ledeen's friend Claire Sterling published her *Reader's Digest* story on "The Plot to Murder the Pope" that put the "Bulgarian connection" hypothesis into mass circulation.

In a recent series of articles for *The Washington Post*, Michael Dobbs reported "The Italian Justice Ministry has turned down repeated requests by the *Post* for information on the conditions in which Mr. Agca was held at Ascoli Piceno.... In particular, ministry officials have refused to say exactly when he was allowed access to the mass media." This was important, Dobbs noted, because Agca could have fashioned much of his story from what he read in the press.

In late October, Judge Martelli submitted his report of more than 1,200 pages of often contradictory and purely circumstantial evidence, concluding that three Turks and three Bulgarians should be brought to trial. This is enough to convince most of the Western world, and first of all its editorial writers, that the "Bulgarian connection" must be true, and that orders went from Moscow to kill the Pope.

*La Repubblica* reported on October 23 that it had posed several questions to Judge Martelli, "taking into account the recent arrest of several SISMI officials, including Lieutenant Colonel Giuseppe Belmonte who along with Francesco Pazienza went several times to Ascoli Piceno prison where the Turkish killer Ali Agca was held. From various sides it has been maintained that

the Pope's attacker was 'guided' by the Italian secret services to accuse the Bulgarians as organizers and participants in the attack in Saint Peter's square on May 13, 1981." To this Judge Martelli replied that in his report he treated at length the hypothesis of Italian secret service involvement, and that the charges being brought were not particularly based on Agca's testimony, since he was not a credible witness.

Without having had the opportunity to read Martelli's lengthy report, one may still find his reply disturbingly inadequate, since according to all reports the circumstantial evidence against the Bulgarians is based precisely on those points of Agca's testimony — his descriptions of Sergei Antonov's hobbies, for instance — that turn out to be true. But the suspicion remains that this accurate information was provided to him by agents of SISMI, an organization with links to P2, the Mafia and above all, to American promoters of the "Bulgarian connection."

## Vets

Continued from page 24

friendship and common values...of threads of value and morality" shared not only by the vets and other Americans but, perhaps more importantly, among the veterans themselves.

Elsewhere in the media the Vietnam veteran is little more than a flimsy plot device — deranged psycho or vengeance-seeking vigilante — a stereotype to be exploited for sensation. Cram was conscious of those stereotypes and, when asked, readily admits that breaking down those myth-images was

"a primary goal" of his film.

At the same time, he has managed to avoid the other, equally unhelpful extreme, that of sentimentality. As Mannion says in the film, "Anyone can tell war stories."

*How Far Home* eschews easy pathos, presenting instead a series of men (and disappointingly few women) whose reactions to a recovery from their war experiences have been complex. For all the ambivalence expressed by many of the veterans in the film, I suspect that every one of them would

IN THESE TIMES DECEMBER 5-11, 1984 **23** agree with Rusty Sachs; when I asked him what message this difficult time of his life had left him with, he replied, "One should never go to war if there's any possible way of avoiding it. War is the lowest and last resort of resolution of conflict."

For more information on *How Far Home* contact Northern Lights Production, 165 Newbury Street, Boston Mass. 02116.

**George Robinson** is a freelance writer based in New York, and a member of the National Writers Union.

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Cynthia Diaz**.

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Introduction to Democratic Socialists of America—an informal discussion of DSA's history and political priorities with Andrea Gundersen. 7:30 p.m., 1949 W. School. Childcare provided. Further information call (312) 871-7700.

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### PHILADELPHIA, PA

#### December 10

Dr. Carl Sagan will give featured address and receive Peace Award at SANE Education Fund's annual dinner. Monday at the Franklin Institute. Wine served 6:00 p.m., dinner 7:00 p.m. Tickets \$40. SANE, 5808 Greene St., Philadelphia, PA 19114, (215) 848-4100.

### NEW YORK

#### December 14

"Far From Poland," document film about Solidarity by Jill Godmilow; comment by Daniel Walkowitz (NYU) and the filmmaker. Sponsored by MARHO, the Middle Atlantic Radical Historians' Organization, at John Jay College, 445 West 59th Street, 7:30 p.m.

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JEWISH CURRENTS, DECEMBER —Editorial, "Reagan's Lonely Landslide," "Jews & Jewish Identity in the Soviet Union," A Statement, Paul Robeson, Jr. & A.B. Magil, "Readers' Forum on Soviet Jews," H. Leivick, "Three Hanuka Candles." Single copies postpaid, \$1.50. Subscription \$12 USA. Jewish Currents, Dept. T, 22 E. 17th St., NYC 10003.

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# Vietnam Vets:



By George Robinson

**R**USTY SACHS, A FORMER MARINE captain, recalls vividly a moment from his visit to the Vietnam memorial in Washington on Veterans' Day 1982.

"When you approach the monument, the predominant visual impression is your own reflection. The names [of men and women killed in the war] are carved in letters that are only half an inch high. So before you're close enough to read them, you see your own reflection.

"During the 15 years after I left Vietnam for the last time... friends, people I had known in the Marine Corps, had recessed in my memory. I would occasionally think about them, and I'd think of them as friends I used to know and I don't see much anymore. Like fraternity brothers. When I [came closer and] saw the names I suddenly realized that there are a lot of my friends who aren't doing anything anymore."

That realization triggered an almost uncontrollable fit of sobbing, which Sach's friend and fellow Viet vet, Bestor Cram, captured in *How Far Home*, an extraordinary short film that was shown recently at the New York Film Festival. (When told that it took a lot of courage for him to allow that sequence to remain in the film, Sachs, who is associate producer, grins and says, "I think it took a lot of courage for Bestor to keep cranking the camera.")

*How Far Home* devotes most of its half-hour running time to the reunion of vets that occurred on Veterans Day 1982 at the opening of the Vietnam memorial. Planned "during the car ride down to Washington," Cram's film focuses on a few veterans over the course of the weekend.

In the process it suggests a few tentative answers to a question that has plagued Americans since the vets started coming home: why have the Vietnam veterans found it so much more difficult to assimilate themselves back into the mainstream of American life than their

predecessors from the two World Wars and Korea?

Of course, one of the obvious answers is the enormous unpopularity of the war itself. It would hardly be a startling observation to say that Vietnam tore at something fundamental in the fabric of America, and that the vets represent a constant physical reminder of that unhappy time.

Moreover, something of the very nature of the war's unpopularity — that it was illegal, immoral in its execution and conception — undoubtedly contributed to the seeming pariah status of the vets. To entirely too many people, including many on the left who ought to know better, they are like illegitimate children, a by-product of a dirty little secret.

But *How Far Home* suggests other reasons as well. One of the most cogently stated of these, and one of the most disturbing reminiscences of the film comes from Dennis Mannion, who recalls, "I was in gunfire position on Tuesday...in an artillery battle. On Saturday I was in the Yale Bowl, watching a football game."

This statement is tellingly juxtaposed with archive footage of WWII GIs returning by sea, a process of over a month's duration, and one can't help but agree with Mannion's flat observation, "They brought us home too fast."

Clearly, the Vietnam veterans glimpsed in *How Far Home*, however varied a group, have in common a deep ambivalence about their war experiences, a sense of something damaged inside themselves that they have only begun to overcome. At the same time, although the film doesn't address this directly, one senses that Cram feels, and I'm inclined to agree with him, that in large part the necessary healing process depends on an active willingness by the nation as a whole to face the presence within its midst of the Vietnam veteran.

In that respect, the event the film recounts, that Veterans' Day dedication and parade, is of signal importance, offering, as Sachs puts it, "a public expression of

*Continued on page 23*

**are  
they  
home  
yet?**